

Maximising the benefits of intervention research to support language and communication in children.

Pauline Frizelle¹, Carol-Anne Murphy², Cristina McKean³

¹University College Cork, Cork, Ireland. ²University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.

³Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom

Abstract

Background: Despite considerable growth in intervention studies for children with or at risk for Developmental Language Disorder (D)LD, current reporting limits the implementation of effective interventions in the real world; results in significant research waste; and has negative ethical and economic implications.

Aim: The aim of this research is to ensure that interventions to support language and communication deliver maximum benefit for children with or at risk for developmental language disorder (D)LD. To do this we aim to develop a set of internationally accepted reporting guidelines that will a) specify the intervention characteristics, participant characteristics and outcomes in children's oral language intervention studies b) reflect the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders c) enable translation of research into practice through comprehensive training d) maximise the potential for meta-analysis and international collaboration.

Method: Our programme of research includes a multi-national core team of representatives from the key groups who will either use or be influenced by the final reporting guidance. We will conduct reviews of the literature (which present typologies of intervention characteristics in (D)LD and related disorders); carry out focus groups with SLTs, researchers and people with DLD; and use systematic consensus methods such as e-Delphi, nominal group technique, and consensus development conferences.

Results: Through the development and adoption of standard intervention reporting criteria, we will reduce research waste, and overcome barriers for practitioners, services and policy-makers in applying intervention evidence to practice. International consensus on intervention reporting, which incorporates key elements of relevance across stakeholders, will capitalise on the growth in intervention studies to enable new methodologies of data pooling, meta-analyses and cross-study comparisons.

Conclusion: By establishing international consensus on reporting guidelines it would significantly accelerate progress in (D)LD intervention research and improve health; educational and economic outcomes for all those with or at risk for (D)LD (in Ireland and internationally) through more efficient and effective intervention approaches.

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