

OC37: People's with aphasia QOL assessment by speech and language therapists in Portugal

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Introduction: People with aphasia have language and communication difficulties that negatively impact in their quality of life.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to investigate if quality of life (QOL) is assessed by Portuguese speech and language therapists (SLT) when working with people with aphasia (PWA) and to determine which areas of QOL are being taken into account in the assessment and intervention carried out by SLT in patients with aphasia in Portugal.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive and cross-sectional exploratory study was conducted. The sample composed by 54 Portuguese SLT and the instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire created for this purpose. The SLT recruited had taken the course of speech language therapy, work in Portugal and made previous assessment/ intervention with PWA.

Results and Discussion: SLT consider important to measure the QOL of PWA, and assume to do so in most cases using non-standardized/ personal instruments (74%). Most SLT are unaware of instruments suitable for PWA that measure the QOL.

The vast majority of SLT (93%) recognizes the importance of *awareness-raising/training courses* on QOL with PWA, so it may suggest that there are many questions about this subject and on the use of tools to measure QOL.

They agree that there is a need for communicative adjustment according to the communicative competences of the person with aphasia when using instruments with PWA (83%). They also agree that the data collected on QOL and life domains provide important information for intervention.

Conclusion: SLTs consider the assessment of PWA's QOL but do not know the instruments available to assess this subject with PWA. Usually they use informal (non-standardized/personal) assessment instruments to collect this data. It is important to reinforce the knowledge and training using QOL assessments with PWA so that SLT gain competence on the subject and can better assess QOL in PWA and systematically use it in intervention (Spreen, 2003; ASHA, 2007; Ribeiro, 2008).

References

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