

Speech and language therapy effective for post-stroke aphasia**Clinical Question**

How effective is speech and language therapy (SLT) for aphasia following stroke?

Bottom Line

SLT benefitted functional use of language, language comprehension (eg. listening or reading), and language production (speaking or writing), when compared with no access to therapy, but it was unclear how long these benefits might last. Functional communication was significantly better in people with aphasia who received therapy at a high intensity (hours per week), high dose (total hours), or over a long duration compared to those that received therapy at a lower intensity, lower dose, or over a shorter period of time. There was insufficient evidence to establish the effectiveness of one SLT theoretical approach over another, with little indication of a difference between group SLT versus one-to-one SLT, and computer-mediated SLT versus therapist-delivered SLT. Similarly, there was little indication of a difference in the effectiveness of SLT facilitated by a trained volunteer versus SLT delivered by a therapist.

Caveat

The benefits of a high intensity or a high dose of SLT were confounded by a significantly higher dropout rate in these intervention groups.

Context

Aphasia is an acquired language impairment following brain damage that affects some or all language modalities: expression and understanding of speech, reading, and writing. Approximately one-third of people who have a stroke experience aphasia.

Cochrane Systematic Review

[Brady MC et al. Speech and language therapy for aphasia following stroke. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 6. Art. No.: CD000425.DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000425.pub4.](#) This review contains 57 studies involving 3,002 participants.