

The King's speech: A discussion about stuttering

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- The King's Speech covers George VI's stuttering and the events around the abdication and war.
- During this period he was "treated" by Lionel Logue.
- Was no such thing as speech therapy for stuttering to base on (some in US).
- Did from instinct. Some things would still be done, some not.

- The responses to the film by people who stutter have not always been positive
- **Therapist**
- "**Trudy Stewart on treatment/science**
- I am disappointed by Trudy Stewart's science part of the Today interview [interview about the King's speech]. "
- Goes on to dispute treatment outcome and lack of know-how on science.

- **Public school head and ex stutterer**



- **Crackpot Award for Dr Martin Stephen**
- "TheStutteringBrain [blog] awards Dr Martin Stephen a Crackpot Award for his article in the Independent:"
- Dr Stephen said "The truth is that a stammer is psychological, not physiological".
- The person who writes the blog thinks it is physiological not psychological (thus the award).

- **The cast of the film**
- King's Speech cast and audience joke and laugh about stuttering
- Comments based on a televised round-table discussion with the cast. "We are totally drunk about the movie. Finally a movie on stuttering. And we think the actors are so concerned about stutterers. They are not. They did the movie for a good story, and not for us. They do not care about us. We are the poodle of the King's Speech."

An early list of symptoms that occurred frequently in children who stutter (Johnson et al., 1959):

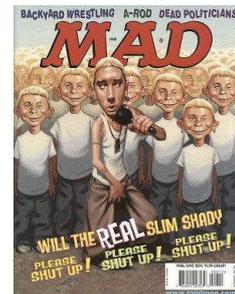
	Word type	Function
1) Incomplete phrases (sometimes called abandonments)	Content	Function
2) Revisions (change of one word for another)	Content	Content
3) Interjections (word and non-word fillers)	Function	Function
4) Whole-word repetitions ("I, I, I")	Function	Function
5) Phrase repetitions ("in the, in the morning")	Function	Function
6) Part-word repetitions ("k-k-Katy")	Content	Content
7) Prolongations ("ssister")	Content	Content
8) Broken words ("di-nosaur")	Content	Content

All speakers produce these sometimes

- Not easy to diagnose
- What symptoms to include?
 - Japanese and whole word repetition
- What threshold to use



Does Eminem stutter?

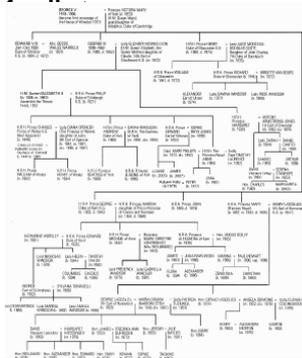


Point is that disfluencies at 3% rate is not a lot as this highly fluent individual shows

- **Genetics**
- Heritable – genes (problems) – link to CNS mechanisms
- Old behav'l work
- Not Mendelian
- More men stutter than women, but:
- Women who stutter more likely to pass on to children than men who stutter (sex modified)

• **George VI**

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- Should be about 2 who stutter and don't know of any reported
- Genes identified – code for proteins involved in cellular lysosome function, which removes damaged molecules and viruses.
- Lysosome function is broad and not clear how would affect CNS (Fisher)
- Chinese work has identified mutant genes in people who stutter that affect basal ganglia functioning (more likely alternative)

- Another Chinese group doing interesting scanning work.
- Other work pointed to structural or functional problem in people who stutter
- + fluency-inducing procedures normalize activity
- Lu work before and after fluency intervention – identified areas that fixed (“neural defect”), where activity disappears after intervention (repaired)
- where activity emerges after intervention (bring about the repair)

- Treatments
- Feedback
- Played music in the film and was fluent
- immediate but limited to occasion that on
- like hearing aid
- 📢 costly \$5000

- Learning
- Reward and punishment (and stuttering is psychological)
- John Wayne film *The Cowboys* (1972). In the film John Wayne hires a group of young men to work on a cattle drive. One of the boys (about age 10) stutters.
- An accident takes place that forces the boy to come to the John Wayne character for help.
- The boy is so shaken that he is unable to speak fluently.
- When it becomes clear what has happened John Wayne verbally abuses him and tells him that he can talk normally if he wishes to.

- Wayne-"You almost let your friend choke to death out in that river."
- Kid-"I'da rather d-d-died then do that."
- Wayne-"And you're a liar!"
- Kid-"It ain't my fault I stutter."
- Wayne-"Listen to me, you whining little welp. You're gonna stop that stuttering or get the hell out of here. You're gonna stop it or go home, do ya hear me?"
- Kid-"Son of a bitch!"
- Wayne-"What did you say?"
- Kid-"You Goddamned son of a bitch!"
- Wayne- "Say that again."
- Kid-"You Goddamned mean son of a bitch."
- Wayne-"Say it faster."
- Kid-"You Goddamned mean dirty son of a bitch."
- Wayne-"I wouldn't make it a habit calling me that, son." 📢

- This cures the boy and he does not stutter again in the film.
- Lidcombe treatment
- Form of learning treatment that “punishes” child.
- Based on operant procedures.
- Reported to be effective
- Problems
- Ns too low to draw firm conclusions
- Stuttering difficult to diagnose in childhood
- ASRC use whole word repetitions which myself and others don’t agree are stutters

Predicting risk – the big issue

- “The ability to make accurate predictions could have a revolutionary impact on the long-term objective of cost-effective selective treatment for stuttering children. It is not practical, possible, or necessary to put every child who stutters into therapy. Economic conditions and emerging health policies, in fact, may make this option more difficult. For any child who appears likely to continue to stutter treatment should not be delayed. But it may be advantageous to defer treatment for children with few or no risk factors and/or mild stuttering that does not cause concern for either child or parents.” (Yairi, Ambrose, Paden & Throneburg, 1996, p. 74).

- Could you predict outcome some years later before received treatment?
- Answer is yes
- Range of risk factors on 8 year olds
- Do they predict outcome at teenage?
- Includes stuttering severity (SSI-3) – technique that does not include whole word repetitions
- Predicts with 80% sensitivity and 80% specificity

- Some therapists don’t like
- Say puts them in an ethical dilemma, but people perfectly able to use this info (US weather forecasts and risk of heart disease).
- What do we mean by intervention?

- Let’s discuss