



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

2008 ASHA Researcher Survey Section Report: Areas of Research

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2010

Written by the ASHA Researcher Survey Group

2008 ASHA Researcher Survey Section Report: Areas of Research

Summary

In an effort to better serve the interests and needs of the communication sciences and disorders (CSD) research community, a survey was fielded on August 5, 2008, to all American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) constituents who indicated their primary or secondary employment function as researcher as well as to individuals who expressed interest in participating based on their response to an advertisement in the ASHA Research Digest e-mail list ($n = 1,233$). Two follow-up reminders were sent to nonrespondents. A total of 303 responses were received, for a usable response rate of 24.6%. Note that of the 303 responses received, 209 individuals completed the entire survey; 94 dropped out of the survey prior to completing all questions.

The survey covered nine broad areas: education and preparation, areas of research, evidence-based practice, research mentoring, domestic and international research collaborations, publications and online tools, reviewer experiences, support for research (financial and institutional), and ASHA's role in supporting researchers.

This report focuses on the areas of research, by content area and type of research, being conducted by our discipline's researchers and scientists.

Areas of Research

Focus of Research

The respondents were asked to indicate the focus of the research that they had conducted over the past 5 years (multiple responses allowed). More than half reported that they were involved in clinical research specific to the nature of a disorder (56%), assessment/diagnosis (53%), and/or treatment (53%; see Figure 1). A slightly lower percentage (45%) indicated that basic research had been their primary area of focus, and only 11% reported that their research focused on clinical research in the area of prevention.

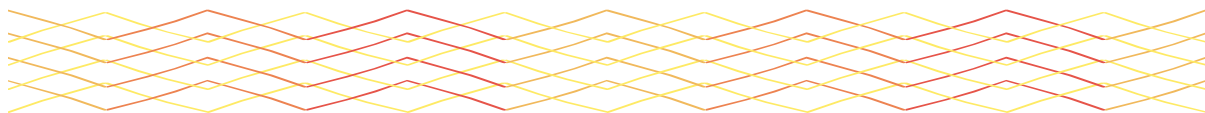
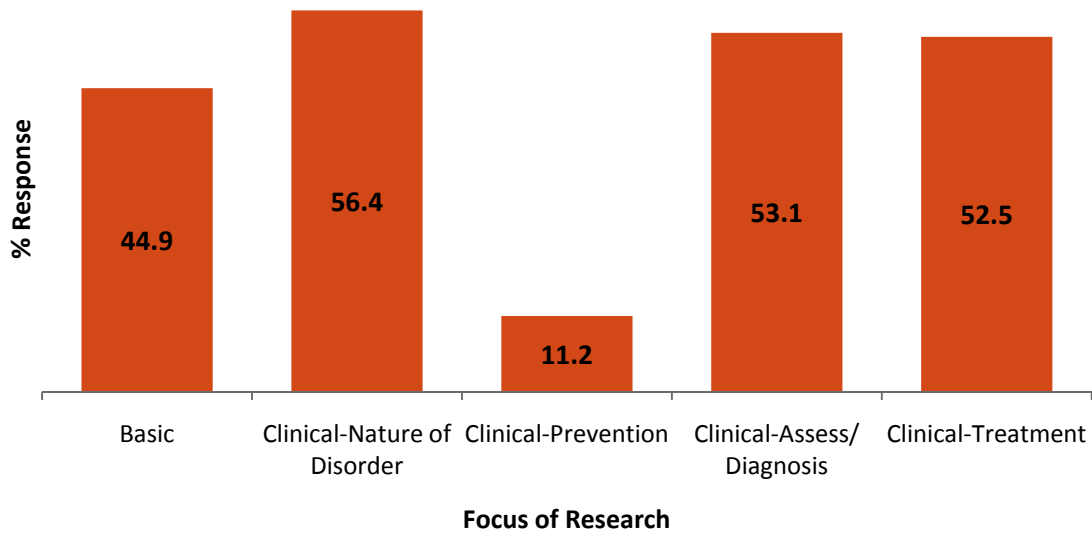


Figure 1. Focus of Research Over the Past 5 Years.



n = 303

Factors Limiting Efforts to Conduct Clinical Research

A list of potential factors that may limit efforts to conduct clinical research relative to the nature, prevention, assessment/diagnosis, and/or treatment of individuals with disorders was posed to respondents. Not surprisingly, limited access to appropriate funding streams received the highest percentage of responses (46%; see Table 1). This was followed by the length of time required for these types of studies (44%) and insufficient access to subjects (38%). The limiting factor mentioned most frequently by respondents in written comments was lack of release time.

Table 1. Factors that may limit efforts to conduct clinical research relative to the nature, prevention, assessment/diagnosis, and/or treatment of individuals with disorders (multiple responses allowed).

Limiting Factor	Response Percentage
Limited access to appropriate funding streams	45.5%
Length of time required for these types of studies	44.2%
Insufficient access to subjects	38.3%
Engaged in other types of research	29.7%
Lack of perceived value for this type of research	20.1%
Insufficient mentoring and/or didactic instruction during your doctoral or postdoctoral education	8.6%
Insufficient publication venues	8.3%
Insufficient knowledge of appropriate research methodologies	6.6%
Minimal or no interest	4.6%

n = 303

Factors Enhancing Efforts to Conduct Clinical Research

Similarly, a list of potential factors that may enhance efforts to conduct clinical research relative to these areas also was posed. It was of interest to note that some of the same factors perceived as limitations also served to enhance respondents' efforts to conduct their research. Table 2 shows that access to subjects (53%) and access to appropriate funding streams (53%) had the most impact. Respondents mentioned in written comments that research in this area also could be enhanced through greater collaboration among researchers and clinicians/clinical agencies.

Table 2. Factors enhancing efforts to conduct clinical research relative to the nature, prevention, assessment/diagnosis, and/or treatment of individuals with disorders (multiple responses allowed).

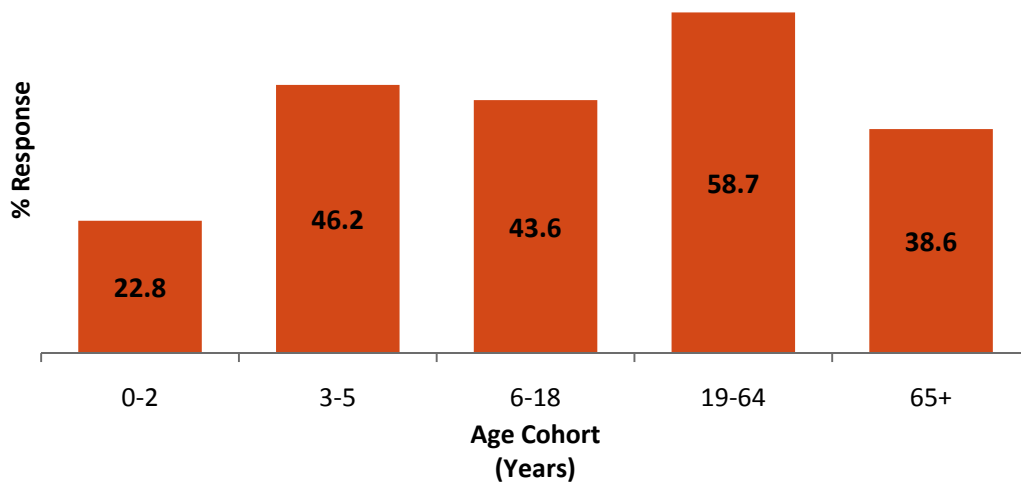
Enhancing Factor	Response Percentage
Access to subjects	53.1%
Access to appropriate funding streams	52.8%
Perceived value for this type of research	49.2%
Knowledge of appropriate research methodologies	39.9%
Sufficient publication venues	30.7%
Mentoring and/or didactic instruction during your doctoral or postdoctoral education	23.1%
Length of time required for these types of studies	22.8%

n = 303

Age Cohorts Recruited for Research

ASHA researchers work with individuals across the entire age continuum. Participants who are age 19–64 years make up the largest group recruited for research (59%), followed by those in the 3–5 (46%) and 6–18 (44%) age groups (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Age Cohorts Recruited for Research.

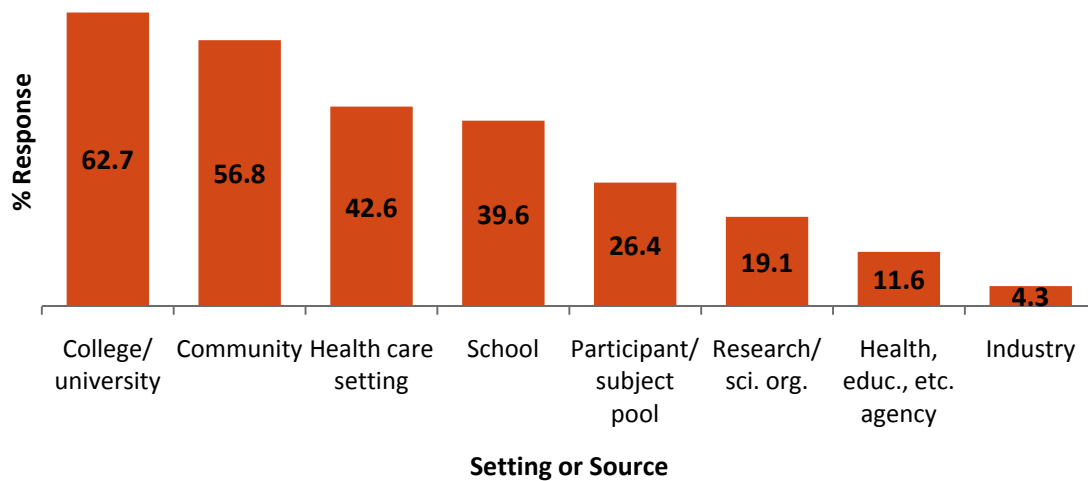


n = 303

Settings and Sources From Which Research Participants Are Drawn

Research participants were drawn from a variety of settings and sources. The college or university served as the primary source (63%), followed by the community (57%), and health care settings (43%) such as clinics and residential health care facilities (see Figure 3). Some of the other sources and settings mentioned by respondents in written comments included military facilities, national associations for clinical groups, and shared databases.

Figure 3. Settings and Sources From Which Research Participants Are Drawn.



n = 303

NOTE. Schools include special, residential, pre-elementary, elementary, and secondary schools, and combined school settings.

Areas of Research Interest

The respondents were presented with a list of 64 possible areas of research interest. The areas receiving the highest percentage of responses were language disorders (36%), language acquisition (28%), language (24%), literacy (22%), normal processes (22%), hearing (20%), aging (19%), neurogenic communication disorders (19%), and learning disabilities (18%; see Table 3). Other areas of interest mentioned by respondents in written comments included autism and speech perception.

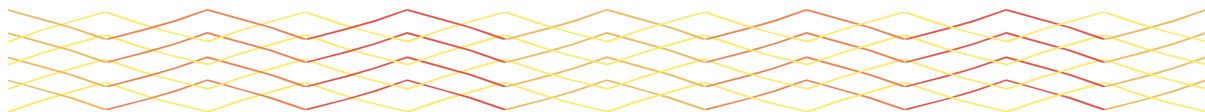


Table 3. Areas of research interest (multiple responses allowed).

Area of Research Interest	Response Percentage	Area of Research Interest	Response Percentage
Accent modification	1.7%	Hearing conservation	6.9%
Acquired apraxia of speech	4.6%	Hearing disorders	13.9%
Aging	18.5%	Intraoperative monitoring	1.0%
Anatomy	5.9%	Language	23.8%
Aphasia	13.5%	Language acquisition	27.7%
Articulation/phonological disorders	13.2%	Language disorders	36.0%
Assistive listening devices	2.0%	Learning disabilities	17.5%
Audiologic (re)habilitation	10.2%	Literacy	21.8%
Auditory/vestibular physiology	8.3%	Neurogenic communication disorders	19.1%
Augmentative/alternative communication	7.3%	Neurolinguistics	12.5%
Aural (re)habilitation	9.6%	Normal processes	22.4%
Balance disorders	3.3%	Oral motor development	4.0%
Brain-stem implants	2.6%	Oral motor training	2.0%
Central auditory processing	9.6%	Orofacial myofunctional disorders	0.3%
Childhood apraxia of speech	6.3%	Otoacoustic emissions	5.0%
Cleft palate	3.3%	Physiology	10.2%
Cochlear implants	16.2%	Psychoacoustics	13.5%
Cognitive-communication disorders	14.2%	Psycholinguistics	14.2%
Cultural and linguistic variables	15.2%	Second language acquisition	8.9%
Dementia	5.3%	Service delivery in the schools	7.9%
Developmental speech motor control	5.9%	Speech	12.5%
Diagnostic/clinical processes	15.2%	Speech acquisition	9.6%
Dyslexia/reading disabilities	12.9%	Speech disorders	14.5%
Electrocochleography	2.6%	Speech motor control	13.2%
Electrophysiology	11.9%	Supervision	3.0%
Feeding disorders	1.7%	Swallowing	5.9%
Fluency	5.6%	Swallowing disorders	7.6%
Genetics	7.9%	Tinnitus	3.3%
Hair cell regeneration	1.3%	Traumatic brain injury	11.9%
Head and neck cancers/laryngectomy	1.3%	Universal newborn hearing screening	4.3%
Hearing	19.8%	Voice	7.6%
Hearing aids	8.6%	Voice disorders	6.9%

n = 303

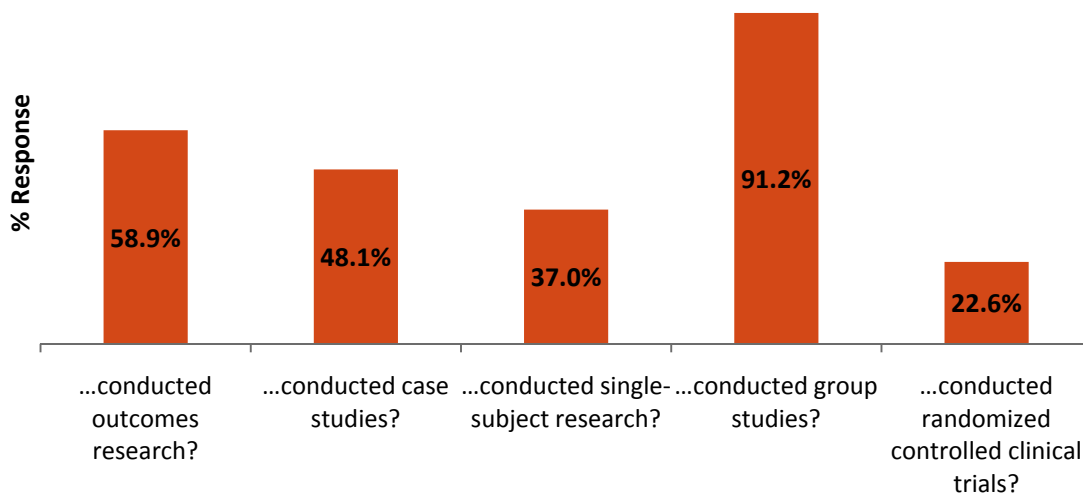
Animal Research

Eight percent of the respondents reported that they had conducted animal research within the past 5 years.

Evidence-Based Practice

Most (91%) of the respondents indicated that they had conducted research involving group studies within the past 5 years. Almost 60% of the respondents indicated that they had conducted outcomes research, and 48% had conducted research involving case studies. Fewer conducted either single-subject research (37%) or randomized controlled clinical trials (23%; see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage of Respondents Answering Yes to the Question "Within the past 5 years, have you..."



n = 289

Additional Information

Additional Survey Reports

Companion reports are also available on the ASHA Web site:

- *Executive Summary*
- *Respondent Demographics*
- *Research Processes*
- *Support for Research*
- *ASHA Resources*

Citation

This report may be cited as follows: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2010). *2008 ASHA Researcher Survey section report: Areas of research*. Available from www.asha.org.

Project Team

The project team comprised Gail Brook, Research Analyst and Technical Writer; Joanne Jessen, Director of Publications (retired); Lemmietta McNeilly, Chief Staff Officer for Speech-Language Pathology; Sharon Moss (project director), Director, Scientific Programs and Research Development (former); Loretta Nunez, Director, Academic Affairs; Jim Potter, Director, Government Relations and Public Policy (former); Margaret Rogers, Chief Staff Officer for Science and Research; and Sarah Slater, Director, Surveys and Information.

Questions?

Questions regarding this report may be directed to Gail Brook at gbrook@asha.org or Sarah Slater at sslater@asha.org.

Thank You

Without the generous cooperation of the members who participate in our surveys, ASHA could not fulfill its mission to provide vital information about the professions and discipline to the Association membership and public. Thank you!