Perspectives on Telepractice in Speech-Language Pathology

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Learner Objectives

The learner will be able to:

- Describe major elements of the study design
- Discuss conclusions of the current study
- Identify possible implications for telepractice implementation
What is telepractice?

Telepractice consists of...

the application of telecommunication technology to provide speech and language services... to patients or fellow clinicians at a distance

ASHA (2005)
Telepractice Services

- Assessment
- Intervention
- Consultation
- Networking

- Telephone
- Email
- Chat/Blogs
- Record and store
- Supplemental resources
- Videoconferencing

http://www.iser.com/online-speechtherapy.html
Literature Review

Telepractice worldwide

- Canada, Sweden, Britain, Netherlands, Belfast, Australia (Ontario Aud-SLP Code of Ethics, 2004; Magnusson, 1998; Mort, 2008; Beijer et al, 2009; McCullough, 2001; Sicotte et al., 2007; Carey et al., 2010; Lewis et al, 2008; O’Brian et al, 2004)
Assessment

• Adults and children with hearing disorders
  (Lancaster et al., 2008; Givens & Elangovan, 2003)

• Adults with dysphagia using real-time telefluoroscopic assessment
  (Perlman & Witthawaskul, 2002)

• Adults with acquired speech and language disorders
  (Duffy et al., 1997)

• Adults with acquired neurological disorders such as TBI, CVA
  (Georgeadis et al., 2004; Palsbo, 2007; Steele, 2009)

• Children and adults with motor speech disorders
  (Hill et al., 2006; Hill et al., 2009; Waite et al., 2006)

• Children with language disorders and delays
  (Grogan-Johnson, 2010; Watie et al., 2009)
Intervention

• Adults with voice disorders  (Mashima et al., 2003)

• Adults with acquired neurological disorders such as TBI, CVA  (Palsbo, 2007; Steele, 2009)

• Adults and children with fluency disorders  
  (Carey et al., 2010; Kully, 2000; Sicotte et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2008; O’Brian et al., 2008)

• Children with articulation/phonological disorders  
  (Banotai, 2008; Povlovy, 2008; Grogan-Johnson, 2010)

• Children with language disorders and delays  
  (Banotai, 2008; Povlovy, 2008; Grogan-Johnson, 2010)

• Preschoolers with a range of special needs  
  (McCullough, 2001)
Limitations

- Lack of cost-benefit analysis (Hill & Theodoros, 2002)
- Insurance and funding restrictions
- Quality of technology
- Ensuring private and secure communication
- Assessment and intervention for all disorders
Benefits

• Ability to reach rural and remote patients

• Ability to overcome SLP shortages, particularly in schools
  (Banotai, 2005; Banotai 2008; Juenger, 2009a; Juenger, 2009b)

• Provision of services at an affordable rate
  (Beijer et al., 2009; Sicotte et al., 2007; Steele, 2009)

• Telepractice as supplementary services
Study Purposes

Survey to determine the perspectives of:

- Practicing public school SLPs in Wisconsin
- Students in graduate and doctoral speech and language pathology programs at Wisconsin public universities
SLP Survey

1. The previous and/or current use of telepractice services by SLPs

2. SLPs’ knowledge and perceptions regarding the application of telepractice services

3. SLPs’ interest in implementing telepractice services in the future
Student Survey

1. Student exposure to the telepractice service model, including previous and/or current use of the telepractice service model

2. Students’ knowledge and perceptions regarding the application of telepractice services

3. Student interest in implementing telepractice services in the future
Surveys

• Created by investigator
• Qualtrics Internet survey software tool
• Self-administered
Increasing Validity & Reliability

• Pilot survey of UW-Eau Claire CSD faculty

• Survey study methodology
  – Straightforward questions and survey layout
  – Non-judgmental language
  – Concise wording
  – Closed-ended questions with “Other” option
Procedure

• IRB training and approval

• Three participant contacts

• Cover letter and informed consent
Analysis

• Descriptive Statistics
  – Percentages
  – Mean, median, standard deviation, range
  – Discussion of open-ended responses
Results & Discussion

- SLP Survey
- Student Survey
SLP Survey

• Total respondents: 108 (response rate = 10%)

• 6 have used or currently use telepractice

• 80% reported positive experience
SLP Survey

• 14% have received training in telepractice

• 20% have read research
  – Reported slightly increased interest after reading

• 67% report interest in education or training
  – Continuing education, in-services, webinars
SLP Survey

• Most common factors preventing use:
  – Lack of training
  – No need for telepractice
  – Lack of stakeholder support
SLP Survey

- Most SLPs do not plan on using telepractice

- Perceived need for telepractice
  - Within the district: 17%
  - Within the region: 44%
SLP Survey Conclusions

• Few SLPs are implementing telepractice

• Reported lack of knowledge as inhibitory

• Interest in education opportunities

• Perceived need
Student Survey

- Total respondents: 103 (response rate = 37%)

- 41% report exposure to telepractice in their program

- 10% report implementing telepractice
  - Most reported experience to be positive
Student Survey

• 14% have read published literature
  – Reported slightly increased interest after reading

• Adequate but incomplete knowledge
  – Service provided
  – Disorders treated
  – Ages treated
  – Regions served
Student Survey

• Further education
  – 64% want to learn more
  – 33% would learn more as part of their program

• Future implementation
  – 52% with adequate training
  – 26% if necessary for their job
  – 19% interested in pursuing
Student Survey Conclusions

• Students are receiving more educational opportunities than practicing SLPs

• Student exposure is still limited

• Need for adequate exposure or education for appropriate implementation
Telepractice Potential

- Overcome gaps in service delivery due to
  - Shortages of SLPs, especially in schools
  - Rural/remote locations

- Reduce itinerant travel time and costs

- ASHA support of telepractice
Summary of Current Study

- Limited SLP application
- Students vs. SLP educational opportunities
- Limited SLP and student exposure
- SLP and student interest reported
- Necessity for educational opportunities
Education & Training

• Exposure in graduate programs for students

• Continuing education opportunities for professionals

• Training to include:
  – Exposure
  – Observation
  – Education
Accessible Research

- Evidence-based literature exists
- SLP and students need exposure
- Publication in ASHA Journals
- Creation of SIG 18 – Telepractice
Further Research

• Single-subject designs

• Telepractice for more disorder types

• Telepractice application in specific settings
Conclusions

• Benefits exist in literature

• ASHA supports the use of telepractice

• SLPs and student interest

• Training and education for adequate knowledge and skills

• Telepractice to help reach all individuals in need
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Questions or Comments?
Thank you!
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