

Speech disfluencies in individuals with tourette syndrome

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April 7, Summary of " Speech disfluencies in individuals with Tourette syndrome" In the article " Speech disfluencies in individuals with Tourette syndrome," De Nil et al. present an analysis of speech disfluencies in a group of people who suffer from Tourettes syndrome to see how their condition affected their speech patterns compared to those without the syndrome. In particular, the authors analyzed self-reported data obtained from a group of children with Tourettes syndrome and without in order to determine whether there were significant differences between groups in terms of developmental stuttering and other kinds of speech problems. The authors concluded that, despite there being no difference in self-reporting, the children with Tourettes syndrome did have a higher level of developmental stuttering, and that this is in line with previous studies.

The introduction section of the article provides a basic overview of Tourettes syndrome, which the authors abbreviate as TS. This section of the paper does a good job of setting the current study within the wider conversation around Tourettes syndrome, arguing that " TS and developmental stuttering seem to share a number of other characteristics," suggesting that they share " etiological factors" in their origin (97). The authors also point out that studies on this topic are not widespread, with most studies focusing on other aspects of Tourettes syndrome, and that those which do focus on speech disfluencies often have flaws such as " variations in the definition of studying" or a lack of evaluation by speech-language pathologists (98). It is this lack of direct study on speech disfluency that the authors hope to address.

For their study, the authors recruited children with Tourettes syndrome from

a clinic at a Toronto hospital which specializes in treating it (98). Specifically, the study focused on 69 children with Tourettes syndrome, ranging in age from 4 to 18 years, and with varying degrees of Tourettes syndrome and other disorders such as Obsessive-compulsive disorder and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (98). Beyond these children, the authors recruited a control group of 27 children ranging in age from 6 to 17 years from the general clinic at the same hospital (98). In order to achieve sensible results, the authors also split the children into age groups.

The study itself had two parts. The first of these was filling out a questionnaire for the child to answer questions on " self-reported presence, nature, and familial incidence of speech and language difficulties" such as stuttering, voice problems, and so on (98). Secondly, each participant was video-taped either reading aloud or narrating a story from pictures, and then talking freely with a trained research assistant (99). Once these tasks had been completed, the research assistants analyzed the reading and conversation samples to figure out how the results matched up with the self-reporting (99).

For analysis, all Tourettes syndrome children were grouped together as no significant differences were found between those with only Tourettes syndrome and those with other disorders (99). The data showed that while children with Tourettes syndrome were only slightly more likely to report speech problems (99-100), and did not report a difference in family history (100), those with Tourettes did show a higher frequency of " more typical disfluencies" than the control group during the recorded phase of the study (100).

The authors suggest that while the self-report data did not show significant differences, the difference in observed disfluencies means that further studies are needed in this area (101). Ultimately they conclude that " the relationship between stuttering and TS is more complex than previously reported," and that more studies are needed here as well (102).