

"We got there in the end...somehow we got there" : a qualitative study of healthcare professionals providing care to people with chronic aphasia, and how technology could assist.

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INTRODUCTION

- Aphasia is a chronic communication disability caused by acquired brain injury, impairing the ability to speak, understand, read and write.
- Health care professionals have difficulty communicating with people with aphasia in hospital¹
- Little is known about community-based healthcare interactions with people with aphasia

OBJECTIVES

- Examine the experiences of health care professionals in their community healthcare communication interactions with people with aphasia
- Explore how technology may assist the interactions

METHOD

- Generic qualitative study interviewing community healthcare professionals (n=7)
- Thematic data analysis²

RESULTS

Six themes were identified.

"It would have been easier if he'd given me a title or something... then I would have been able to do a bit of research".

"I could identify that he was upset, but didn't have the skills to be able to give him any assistance... I didn't know what I had to do to give him support"

DISCUSSION

- Healthcare may be compromised for people with aphasia in the community
- HCPs are not sufficiently resourced to have the knowledge and skills to enable healthcare communication to people with aphasia.

CONCLUSIONS

- Providing healthcare to people with aphasia was challenging, taking extra emotional, intellectual effort and time
- Low knowledge of aphasia and communication skills led to unsuccessful interactions causing emotional distress and compromised care
- Interactions and relationships between healthcare professionals and people with aphasia became easier over time
- More knowledge and skill about conversation partner training led to more successful interactions
- More system level supports such as conversation partner training and technology support are recommended
- Future research is needed to see if a purpose-built Aphasia app would meet people's need in the community.



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