

Results of the Better Conversations with Primary Progressive Aphasia (BCPPA) pilot-feasibility trial: Communication Partner Training to keep families together

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There has been a growing focus on functional communication interventions for PPA, which support a person to participate in a life situation. One such intervention, communication partner training (CPT) aims to change conversation behaviours in both the person with PPA and their communication partner (CP). CPT has a growing evidence base in stroke aphasia, however these programs are not designed to meet the needs of people with progressive communication difficulties. To address this, the authors developed a CPT program entitled Better Conversations with PPA (BCPPA) and undertook a pilot-feasibility trial to establish for a future full trial:

- Predicted recruitment rates
- Acceptability
- An assessment of treatment fidelity
- An appropriate primary outcome-measure

Methodology:

This was a single blind, randomised controlled pilot-feasibility study comparing BCPPA to no treatment, delivered across 11 National Health Services in the UK. Recordings of local SLT collaborators were analysed to examine fidelity. Participants completed feedback forms reporting on acceptability. Pre-and post-intervention measures targeted conversation behaviours, communication goals and quality of life.

Results:

Eighteen people with PPA and their CPs completed the study. Participants rated BCPPA positively. Treatment fidelity was 87.2%. Conversation behaviours demonstrated changes in the intended direction and 29 or 30 goals were achieved or over-achieved. The Aphasia Impact Questionnaire was identified as the preferred outcome measure.

Conclusion:

The first randomised controlled UK pilot-feasibility study of a CPT program for people with PPA and their families demonstrates BCPPA is a promising intervention. Two thirds of participants over-achieved goals, positive conversation change was visible and treatment fidelity high.

Conflicts of interest

Nil