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Communication and Quality of Life Interventions for PPA: Where are we now?

Language and communication impairments (aphasia) are the defining features of the clinical neurodegenerative dementia syndrome primary progressive aphasia (PPA), which can be caused by Alzheimer's disease (AD) or frontotemporal lobar degeneration. The progressive loss of communication negatively impacts quality of life for persons living with PPA and their care partners including reducing life-space mobility, shrinking social interactions, and lowering participation in community activities. Nonpharmacological interventions, including speech-language and psychosocial intervention, may offer significant benefit to the quality of life for persons with PPA and their care partners, but have historically lacked efficacy evidence as well as guidelines to direct best clinical care practices. We have been changing this landscape, through the development of the Communication Bridge (CB) intervention with strategically staged, rigorous clinical trials that are on a path towards implementation. The CB1 trial established feasibility of delivering an intervention at a global scale via telepractice and demonstrated gains in functional communication outcomes that were maintained 6-months post baseline. Our current CB2 trial provides the first rigorous superiority, randomized controlled trial (RCT) of speech-language intervention in PPA. This presentation will highlight our life participation-focused quality of life intervention, how technology can be used to address barriers associated with care, and key paths ahead towards intervention implementation for those with PPA and related syndromes.

