

The quality of the evidence base in Speech Pathology: current issues

Sheena Reilly

Professor of Speech Pathology

Faculty Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, University of Melbourne

Director of Speech Pathology, Royal Children's Hospital

Director, Healthy Development Theme, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute



My role(s)

Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, AH professionals, Lab scientists,
Epidemiologists, Geneticists and Social Scientists

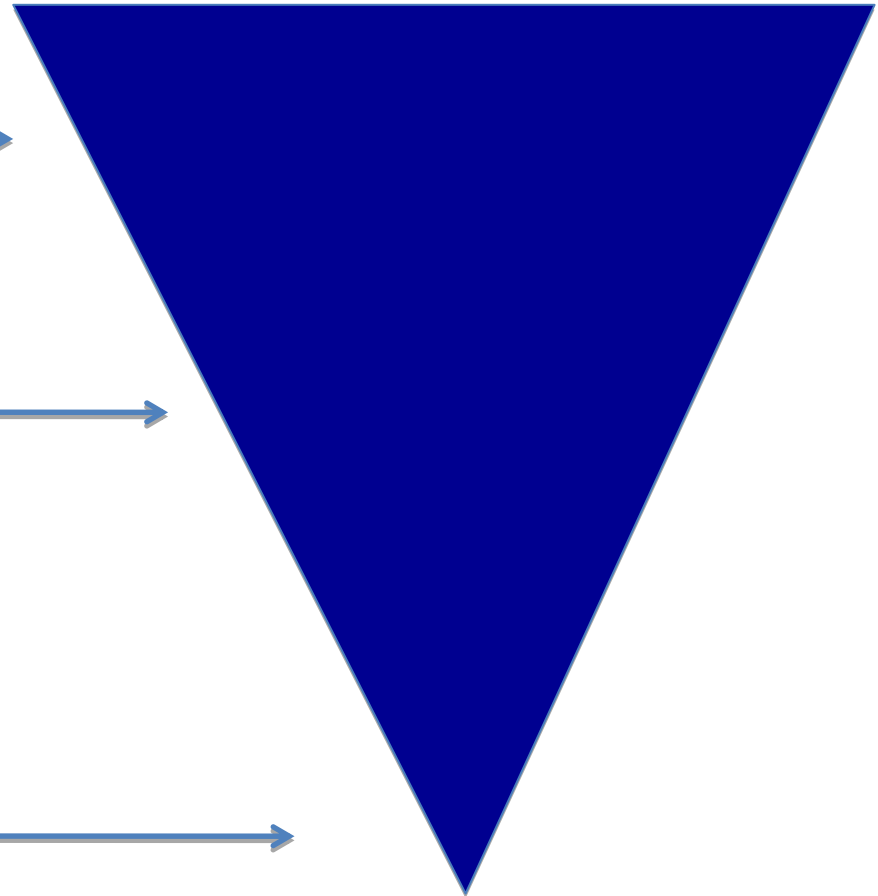
Population Health



Allied Health



Discipline specific



My brief

- Quality of the evidence in SP
- Does evidence change practice in SP?
- Barriers/facilitators to interdisciplinary research
- Are there specific challenges for SP?
- Are there examples of research excellence in SP?

Quality of evidence in SP

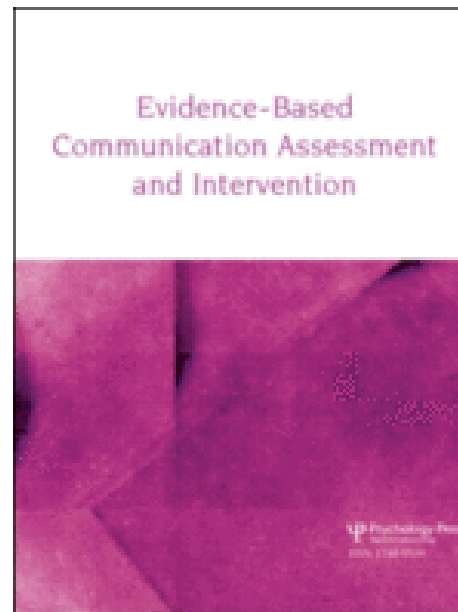
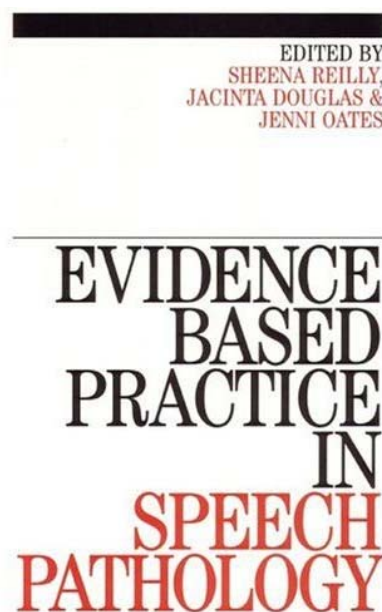
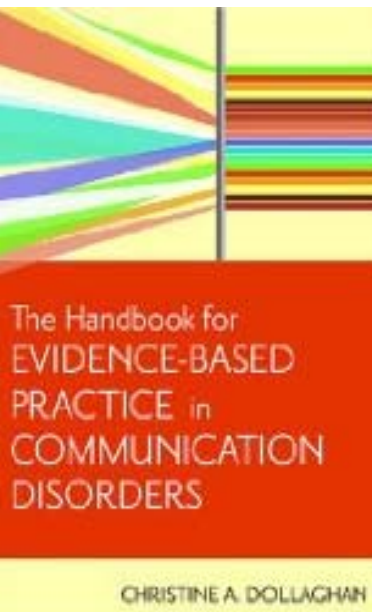
Quick answer

- Patchy
- No better/worse than any other profession

Quality of evidence in SP

Long answer

- Read the books and papers



My brief

- Quality of the evidence in SP
- **Does evidence change practice in SP?**
- Barriers/facilitators to interdisciplinary research
- Are there specific challenges for SP?
- Are there examples of research excellence in SP?

Does evidence change practice in SP?

- Yes
- Onslow et al
- Evidence-based intervention (Lidcombe program) in developmental stuttering
- Global impact

My brief

- Quality of the evidence in SP
- Does evidence change practice in SP?
- **Barriers/facilitators to interdisciplinary research**
- Are there specific challenges for SP?
- Are there examples of research excellence in SP?

Challenge no 1

- History of paediatric speech pathology
- Reactive – responsive to problems that present in clinical setting
- Discipline specific research focus to problems that concern many disciplines
- Education – clinic rather than population health focus

Challenge no 2

- The concept of a discipline's practice being evidence based
 - Speech Pathology
 - Physiotherapy
 - Occupational Therapy or
 - Allied Health

Discipline vs problem/disease/disorder

Challenge no 3

- In health and education we face increasingly complex questions/problems that demand we:
 - move beyond the confines of individual disciplines
 - explore new models for ‘team’ science
 - require collaborations across disciplines and among diverse groups
 - new ways of combining skills and disciplines
Discipline specific focus ≠ success

My brief

- Quality of the evidence in SP
- Does evidence change practice in SP?
- Barriers/facilitators to interdisciplinary research
- Are there specific challenges for SP?
- Are there examples of research excellence in SP?

Are the challenges different for SP

- No

Has anyone made it yet?

If so, who?

How did they do it?

What are the key characteristics?



Logemann
Enderby
Tomblin
Yairi
Law

Onslow

Onslow – ASRC - UoS

- Outstanding leadership
- Ability to attract funding – competitive not only against AH disciplines
- High quality staff and students
- Strong collaborations
- Multidisciplinary focus
- Publishing track record
- Impact on clinical practice
- Infrastructure (e.g. University/research institute)

AH research on the RCH campus

Campus commitment

- Leadership (D/E) in Psychology, Social work and Speech Pathology
- Discipline champions (B/C occupational and Physiotherapy, Music therapy, Play therapy)
- Attract, develop and retain the best new researchers from clinical or academic backgrounds both nationally and internationally

Funding:

- Seed funding for AH led projects
- Trainee research scholarships for AH
- Career Development Awards for clinicians

Career guidance:

- Clear performance objectives
- Active mentoring scheme

Focus:

- Research embedded in strong multidisciplinary teams
- Strategic research that meets the current and future needs of children and families

Infrastructure:

- Support and training routes for research skills to support the future research leaders across all professions and disciplines
- Epidemiology and biostatistics
- Equipment/tools etc
- Talent spotting
 - etc etc

SP Researcher of the future

- Cross-disciplinary research training
- Operate at the intersection of disciplines
- In paediatric SP knowledge of
 - Epidemiology & Biostatistics
 - Move beyond behaviour
 - To consider genes, brains and behaviour

Thank you