

A Profile of the Patients at the Hearing and Speech Clinic at the University of Jordan: A Retrospective Study

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Abstract : The significance of the study: This retrospective study examined the speech and language profiles of patients who received clinical services at the University of Jordan Hearing and Speech Clinic (UJ-HSC) from 2009 to 2014. The UJ-HSC clinic is located in the capital Amman and was established in the late 1990s. It is the first hearing and speech clinic in Jordan and one of first speech and hearing clinics in the Middle East. This clinic provides services to an annual average of 2000 patients who are diagnosed with different communication disorders. Examining the speech and language profiles of patients in this clinic could provide an insight about the most common disorders seen in patients who attend similar clinics in Jordan. It could also provide information about community awareness of the role of speech therapists in the management of speech and language disorders. Methodology: The researchers examined the clinical records of 1140 patients (797 males and 343 females) who received clinical services at the UJ-HSC between the years 2009 and 2014 for the purpose of data analysis for this study. The main variables examined in the study were disorder type and gender. Participants were divided into four age groups: children, adolescents, adults, and older adults. The examined disorders were classified as either speech disorders, language disorders, or dysphagia (i.e., swallowing problems). The disorders were further classified as childhood language impairments, articulation disorders, stuttering, cluttering, voice disorders, aphasia, and dysphagia. Results: The results indicated that the prevalence for language disorders was the highest (50.7%) followed by speech disorders (48.3%), and dysphagia (0.9%). The majority of patients who were seen at the JU-HSC were diagnosed with childhood language impairments (47.3%) followed consecutively by articulation disorders (21.1%), stuttering (16.3%), voice disorders (12.1%), aphasia (2.2%), dysphagia (0.9%), and cluttering (0.2%). As for gender, the majority of patients seen at the clinic were males in all disorders except for voice disorders and cluttering. Discussion: The results of the present study indicate that the majority of examined patients were diagnosed with childhood language impairments. Based on this result, the researchers suggest that there seems to be a high prevalence of childhood language impairments among children in Jordan compared to other types of speech and language disorders. The researchers also suggest that there is a need for further examination of the actual prevalence data on speech and language disorders in Jordan. The fact that many of the children seen at the UJ-HSC were brought to the clinic either as a result of parental concern or teacher referral indicates that there seems to an increased awareness among parents and teachers about the services speech pathologists can provide about assessment and treatment of childhood speech and language disorders. The small percentage of other disorders (i.e., stuttering, cluttering, dysphasia, aphasia, and voice disorders) seen at the UJ-HSC may indicate a little awareness by the local community about the role of speech pathologists in the assessment and treatment of these disorders.

Keywords : clinic, disorders, language, profile, speech

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