Dr Jo Saul

Aims

1. Create a large, long, and representative UK-based longitudinal sample of school-aged minimally verbal children
2. Measure each child’s skills in domains linked to language at the start to determine which predict spoken language
3. Estimate how frequently apraxia signs and broader motor difficulties occur in the cohort

Method

- Recruit 150 minimally verbal children aged 4-12yrs via schools, independent practitioners, social media and charities
- Measure language at 4 time points spread over 3 years
- Combine parent-mediated remote data gathering with traditional in-person child assessments and parent report measures
- Measures of wellbeing, educational attainment and functional outcomes also gathered, to evaluate how these covary with spoken language development
- There will be no exclusion criteria to reflect the true diversity of co-occurring conditions in this population (and no restriction to monolingual participants)

Analysis

- Examine relationships between initial predictors and language trajectories
  - Latent Growth Curves will be used if sample characteristics permit
  - Otherwise linear mixed effects models will be used
- Establish their prevalence and stability of apraxia signs and motor difficulties in this cohort
- Latent transition analysis to determine subgroups

Inclusion criteria

- “Minimally verbal” at Time 1: not regularly using intelligible, flexible phrase speech communicatively
- Age: 4-12yrs at Time 1
- Language challenges attributed to any neurodevelopmental condition: no autism diagnosis required (but expected for most)

References


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