

I have been asked to convey the sentiments of significant numbers of local and national Australian speech pathologists concerned about the submission from Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) which states "That Medicare rebates be made available for the evidenced-based speech pathology intervention "Lidcombe Program" for eligible three and four-year-old children for the treatment of stuttering." Further, Speech Pathology Australia thank "...the team at the Australian Stuttering Research Centre who provided expert advice about the evidence base for the Lidcombe Program and supported the Association's submission" (p. 5 "**Speak Out**" February, 2015).

In the light of this submission, certain points need to be clarified and reiterated:

1. The funding **would** be restricted to the Lidcombe program only. This has not been altered or refuted by any official communication from Speech Pathology Australia.
2. The proposal **is** that the Australian government would fund this treatment and this treatment **only**. In fact communications members have had with government bodies have indicated that the Federal budget (as with all other governments) has a finite health budget which could not extend to other treatments. These communications indicated that future attention would be given to **other** disorders and not to more stuttering treatments. In the light of this, I am bemused as to why there have been assumptions made and posted to the contrary.
3. The submission has not been released by Speech Pathology Australia. A request for a copy of the submission made directly to SPA was not successful and it appears that a copy will not be released in the near future (for reasons of confidentiality I won't directly quote the response).
4. Australia is part of a global community. Our conversations, professional work and research do not stop at the borders of our country. I am an academic, a scientist, a clinician, a clinical educator and a clinical researcher. I have treated children and adults in Australia (and overseas) for over 35 years. I am a member of SPA and ASHA and I am on the IFA Training, Certification and Standards committee. I am in constant communication with new graduates, metropolitan and rural clinicians and members of the general public. It is a culmination of their united concerns that has prompted me to write this clarification statement.
5. I have submitted the following proposal to Speech Pathology Australia that the submission be rescinded or amended to:

- reflect Speech Pathology Australia's Principles of Practice in respect to diversity
- include the broad based evidence for early interventions for children who stutter
- respect client choice
- respect the individual needs of a client
- align with the fact that there is no exclusivity of treatment promoted or endorsed by Speech Pathology Australia for any other disorder with which speech pathologists work

I have asked that the proposal extend coverage to children presenting with the disorder (childhood stuttering), rather than to a specific treatment.

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