Greetings from our group!

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to better understand the language problems of people with aphasia and to make treatments more effective.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our research!

This year we have spent time investigating:

• how well people with aphasia learn new words
• whether the words are still there but are just hard to recall
• how aphasia affects people who speak more than one language

Ultimately, we hope to develop better treatments for people with aphasia.

We hope you enjoy reading more about our work.

Help Wanted

Are you interested in helping us? We are looking for:

• Bilingual people with aphasia
• People with aphasia who are interested in meditation
• Anyone with aphasia who would like to help us!

Please contact:
Professor Lyndsey Nickels
lyndsey.nickels@mq.edu.au
(02) 9850 8448

If you do not have aphasia and still want to help, you can sign up to our Adult Database at www.ccd.edu.au/registers.
How does treatment improve word retrieval?

We have completed the testing in a study looking at word finding treatments, trying to find out what treatments work and why. This research will help us understand the relationship between learning or response to treatment and general thinking abilities, such as memory and attention.

New tests launched!

We have developed two new tests to assess the language abilities of people with aphasia - The English ‘Battery for Assessment of Plural Processing in Aphasia’ (BAPPA). There are two versions of the BAPPA and both are available for clinicians and researchers online.

Spelling Treatment Study

PhD student Trudy Krajenbrink has been working on a treatment study looking at spelling. Two individuals with severe spelling problems after stroke participated. Following treatment, both people showed better spelling on words they had practiced, but unfortunately words that weren’t practiced did not improve.

Constraint-Induced Aphasia Therapy

Speech pathologist Inga Hameister visited to conduct research in constraint-induced aphasia therapy. The participants in the study improved in word retrieval for trained items and there was some improvement in untrained material.
Member Spotlight: Dr Shiree Heath

How long have you been part of the Group?
I joined the Aphasia Research Group in February 2013.

What do you do?
My research aims to find out how word retrieval treatment works in the brain.

Could you share some career highlights?

In 2011, I entered a video contest that allowed me to create an information resource specifically for children and raise awareness about aphasia. It is called “The Treasure Hunt”.

[You can watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gq12cMUZPg4]

Did you know…
• Both languages may be affected
• Both languages may mix together
• One language may improve more than the other

Aphasia In Two Languages

When a person who speaks two languages has aphasia, this is known as bilingual aphasia.

Did you know…
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• Both languages may mix together
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Sharing Knowledge with teachers in China

In July, Dr Britta Biedermann visited the Beijing Haidian Special Education School in China and spoke with special education teachers about language assessment and what it means for language treatment.
Trophy Time

Professor Lyndsey Nickels was awarded multiple distinctions this year for her excellence in research and in supervision of higher degree research students.

Caregiver shares her story

Shirley Rutherford’s late husband Boyd suffered from Primary Progressive Aphasia. Shirley spoke about her experiences at a meeting held at the War Memorial Hospital in Sydney.

Her story has been included in a special issue of an international journal, which will soon be published as a book. The book can be ordered by contacting Lyndsey Nickels at lyndsey.nickels@mq.edu.au.

Coming Up in 2015

Aphasia Therapy for Bilingual People

Some words sound the same but have different meanings, like ‘knight’ and ‘night’ or ‘cricket’ the insect and ‘cricket’ the game. Our research has shown that the pronunciations of these words may be stored together in the brain. We can now investigate if aphasia therapy targeting improvement in one meaning of a word will improve the other meaning.

Therapeutic potential of Meditation

We are looking at the effects of meditation training on language and its potential for use in treatment for people with aphasia.

PhD Students

This coming year, Trudy Krajenbrink, Anastasiia Romanova and Vishnu Nair will be submitting their PhDs. Also, we will welcome Dr Theresa Schubert and Inga Hameister to the team.

Dr Nora Fieder completed her PhD and received an official Commendation for her work.

Congratulations Lyndsey and Nora!