

STUTTERING

Compiled by Dr. Joseph Agius, B.A., M.Sc.(Dublin), Ed.D. (Sheffield)

What is stuttering?

What causes stuttering?

How many people stutter?

What is the ratio of males to females who stutter?

How many children stutter?

Is stuttering caused by emotional or psychological problems?

I think my child is beginning to stutter. Should I wait or seek help?

Are there any famous people who stutter?

I read about a new cure for stuttering. Is there such a thing?

Links

What is stuttering?

Stuttering is a communication disorder in which the flow of speech is broken by repetitions (li-li-like this), prolongations (lllllike this), or abnormal stoppages (no sound) of sounds and syllables. There may also be unusual facial and body movements associated with the effort to speak.

What causes stuttering?

There are four factors most likely to contribute to the development of stuttering: genetics (approximately 60% of those who stutter have a family member who does also); child development (children with other speech and language problems or developmental delays are more likely to stutter); neurophysiology (recent research has shown that people who stutter process speech and language in different areas of the brain than those who do not stutter); and family dynamics (high expectations and fast-paced lifestyles can contribute to stuttering).

Stuttering may occur when a combination of factors comes together and may have different causes in different people. It is probable that what causes stuttering differs from what makes it continue or get worse.

How many people stutter?

Approximately 1% of the population.

What is the ratio of males to females who stutter?

Stuttering affects four times as many males as females.

How many children stutter?

Some 20 percent of all children go through a stage of development during which they encounter disfluencies severe enough to be a concern to their parents. The best prevention tool is early intervention.

Is stuttering caused by emotional or psychological problems?

Children and adults who stutter are no more likely to have psychological or emotional problems than children and adults who do not. There is no reason to believe that emotional trauma causes stuttering.

I think my child is beginning to stutter. Should I wait or seek help?

It is best to seek ways that you, the parents, can help as soon as possible. If the stuttering persists beyond three to six months or is particularly severe, you may want to seek help from a speech-language pathologist. You can contact the **Speech Language Department, Ingiered Road, Luqa on 21230822** or any other private state registered Speech Language Pathologist.

Are there any famous people who stutter?

James Earl Jones, John Stossel, Bill Walton, Mel Tillis, Winston Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, Julia Roberts, Bruce Willis, Carly Simon, Annie Glenn, Nicholas Brendon, Ken Venturi, Bob Love, John Updike, King George VI –are all famous people who stuttered and went on to have successful lives.

I read about a new cure for stuttering. Is there such a thing?

There are no instant miracle cures for stuttering. Therapy, electronic devices, and even drugs are not an overnight process. However, a speech language pathologist can help not only children but also teenagers, young adults and even older adults make significant progress toward fluency.

*(adapted and reproduced from the Stuttering Foundation of America
www.stutterSFA.org)*

Links:

*Stuttering Foundation of America
www.stutterSFA.org*

*The Association for Research into Stammering in Childhood
<http://www.stammeringcentre.org/s-index>*

*International Fluency Association
<http://www.theifa.org/>*