

People who stutter from the perspective of communication diversity and inclusion at work: an integrative literature review

Pessoas que gaguejam sob o olhar da diversidade comunicacional e inclusão no trabalho: uma revisão bibliográfica integrativa

Personas tartamudas desde la perspectiva de la diversidad comunicacional y la inclusión en el trabajo: una revisión integradora de la literatura

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Abstract

Introduction: the centrality of work is essential for the fulfillment of individuals, including those who face additional barriers, such as those who stutter. This group may find work an environment of inclusion or exclusion, depending on the opportunities offered. **Objective:** this integrative review aims to identify the challenges and strategies for the exercise of work by people who stutter, based on the Bioethics of Care, under an inclusive approach that values communicational diversity. **Method:** the research followed the steps of an integrative review, including the selection of databases, definition of

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LCN: Study Proposal, Methodology, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Draft Article, Critical Review.

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descriptors, inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in the analysis of 24 relevant articles. The main themes identified were: Stuttering and work (intersectionality, discrimination, stigma); Social barriers (disability, identity, public ignorance about stuttering, university) and Clinical and occupational care. **Results:** the results show that, despite inclusive policies, there is an urgent need to discuss the guarantee of human rights and social inclusion for people who stutter, due to structural problems in the labor market and the lack of awareness about stuttering. **Conclusion:** It is essential to consider these factors to ensure equal access to health care and inclusion, eliminating barriers that perpetuate discrimination and stigma.

Keywords: Stuttering; Centrality of work; Communication; Stigma and Diversity.

Resumo

Introdução: a centralidade do trabalho é essencial para a realização dos indivíduos, igualmente para aqueles que enfrentam barreiras adicionais, como quem gagueja. Este grupo pode encontrar no trabalho um ambiente de inclusão ou exclusão, dependendo das oportunidades oferecidas. **Objetivo:** esta revisão integrativa objetiva identificar os desafios e estratégias para o exercício do trabalho por pessoas que gaguejam, com base na Bioética do Cuidado, sob uma abordagem inclusiva que valorize a diversidade comunicacional. **Método:** a pesquisa seguiu as etapas de uma revisão integrativa, incluindo a seleção de bases de dados, definição de descritores, critérios de inclusão e exclusão, resultando na análise de 24 artigos relevantes. Os temas principais identificados foram: Gagueira e trabalho (interseccionalidades, discriminação, estigma); Barreiras sociais (deficiência, identidade, desconhecimento público sobre a gagueira, universidade) e Atendimento clínico e ocupacional. **Resultados:** os resultados mostram que, apesar das políticas inclusivas, há uma necessidade urgente de se discutir a garantia dos direitos humanos e a inclusão social para pessoas que gaguejam, devido a problemas estruturais no mercado de trabalho e à falta de conscientização sobre a gagueira. **Conclusão:** é essencial considerar tais fatores a fim de assegurar acesso igualitário a cuidados de saúde e inclusão, eliminando barreiras que perpetuam discriminação e estigma.

Palavras-chave: Gagueira; Centralidade do trabalho; Comunicação; Estigma e Diversidade.

Resumen

Introducción: la centralidad del trabajo es esencial para la realización de las personas, también para quienes enfrentan barreras adicionales, como quienes tartamudean. Este colectivo puede encontrar un entorno de inclusión o exclusión en el trabajo, dependiendo de las oportunidades que se le ofrezcan. **Objetivo:** esta revisión integrativa tiene como objetivo identificar los desafíos y estrategias para el desempeño del trabajo de personas tartamudas, bajo un enfoque inclusivo que valora la diversidad comunicacional. **Método:** la investigación siguió los pasos de una revisión integradora, incluyendo la selección de bases de datos, definición de descriptores, criterios de inclusión y exclusión, resultando en el análisis de 24 artículos relevantes. Los principales temas identificados fueron: tartamudez y trabajo (interseccionalidades, discriminación, estigma); Barreras sociales (discapacidad, identidad, desconocimiento público sobre tartamudez, universidad) y Atención clínica y ocupacional. **Resultados:** los resultados muestran que, a pesar de las políticas inclusivas, urge discutir la garantía de los derechos humanos y la inclusión social de las personas tartamudas, debido a problemas estructurales en el mercado laboral y la falta de conciencia sobre la tartamudez. **Conclusión:** es fundamental considerar estos factores para garantizar el acceso igualitario a la atención sanitaria y la inclusión, eliminando barreras que perpetúan la discriminación y el estigma.

Palabras clave: Tartamudez; Centralidad del trabajo; Comunicación; Estigma y Diversidad.

Introduction

Stuttering is a fluency disorder, characterized as a neurodevelopmental condition. It appears in childhood, a period in which the neural networks linked to neuropsychomotor, linguistic and emotional development are fully maturing. It may be associated with an interaction between genetic predisposition, environmental factors and specific neurological changes. It is involuntary and intermittent in terms of speech flow,¹ and has an incidence rate of 5%.² Before it becomes Persistent Developmental Stuttering, which will depend on the risk factors³, there is the possibility of spontaneous and natural remission of symptoms,⁴ in childhood.

These symptoms, which can range from hesitation to repetition of sentences (common disfluencies); or interruptions in the flow of speech, with repetitions of sounds and syllables; blockages and prolongations, among others (stuttering disfluencies), can evolve into Persistent Developmental Stuttering, with no possibility of remission, and which has a current prevalence rate of 1%², in the western population.

People who stutter (PWS) experience *bullying*, at school stage,⁵ and in adult life, with difficulties in the university environment and at work,⁶ which can significantly affect their social and professional lives.

In the workplace, they face stigmas that label them as less competent and with less chance of career progression.⁶ These barriers are intensified by the corporate culture, which values fast and fluent communication, ignoring the needs of PWS.⁷ In this way, there are possible impacts on their self-image and even the development of anxiety, limiting opportunities for inclusion and professional progress.

Erving Goffman,⁸ in his work dated 1980, illustrates the dynamics of concealment and exposure in stuttering, based on the complexity of social interactions and the vulnerability faced by those who stutter. The need to hide a perceived weakness and the inevitable risk of exposure generate significant anxiety and negatively impact self-image and social relationships.

The individual who covers up may also suffer the classic and fundamental experience of having to expose himself during a face-to-face interaction, betrayed by the weakness he is trying to hide, by others present, or by impersonal circumstances. The

situation of the stutterer is an example... (Goffman, 1980, p.74).

Furthermore, factors such as gender and race can worsen inequalities.

Human work is an essential practice that transcends individual survival and fulfillment. It is a means by which human beings transform reality, interact with nature and build social and cultural relationships.⁹ Therefore, for individuals who face additional barriers, such as those who stutter, work can be a powerful tool for inclusion and overcoming.

Given this panorama, this integrative review aims, in relation to PWS in the world of work: 1- identify barriers and facilitators; 2- point out existing conflicts and 3- learn about inclusive strategies and approaches that facilitate communication.

Method

We carried out an integrative bibliographic review with the aim of understanding the scientific evidence available on the barriers and facilitators faced by PWS, in accessing and remaining in the job market.

The process followed the necessary guidelines for an integrative bibliographic review,^{10,11,12} including the selection of databases, definition of search terms (descriptors), establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and, finally, the selection of relevant articles, after careful analysis carried out by two reviewers.

Procedures adopted

The guiding question of this study was: What are the barriers and facilitators faced by people who stutter in the workplace?

As a search strategy, the search was carried out in July 2024 through the Capes Periodicals Portal, using Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) combined with the Boolean operator “AND” after the term STUTTERING, including: WORK, JOB, THE JOB MARKET, JOB SATISFACTION, EMPLOYMENT. The inclusion criteria included open access articles, available in full, published in Portuguese, English and Spanish, in the last 20 years, that dealt with the topic of stuttering and work/employment. Articles on stuttering in childhood, neurogenic and psychogenic stuttering, autism, and other syndromes, and other distinct areas of

fluency in adults who stutter were excluded. During the analysis of the works evaluated, relevant bibliographic references were included in this review.

The Periodical Portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel - CAPES was chosen to search for articles, as it is a portal that brings together updated national and

international digital scientific content with a high impact factor. Available free of charge to the entire Brazilian academic community, it is one of the largest virtual scientific collections in the country., in a country with so many asymmetries, the choice to use it is valid and necessary, even to expand access to the present study.

Article selection steps

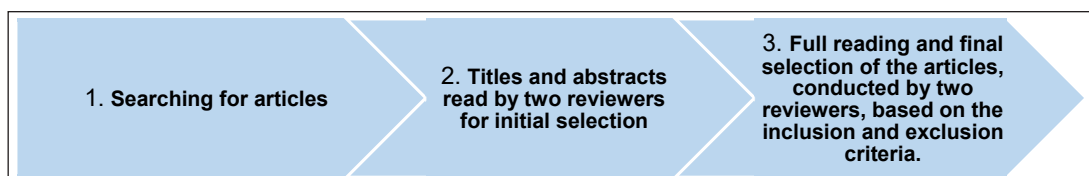
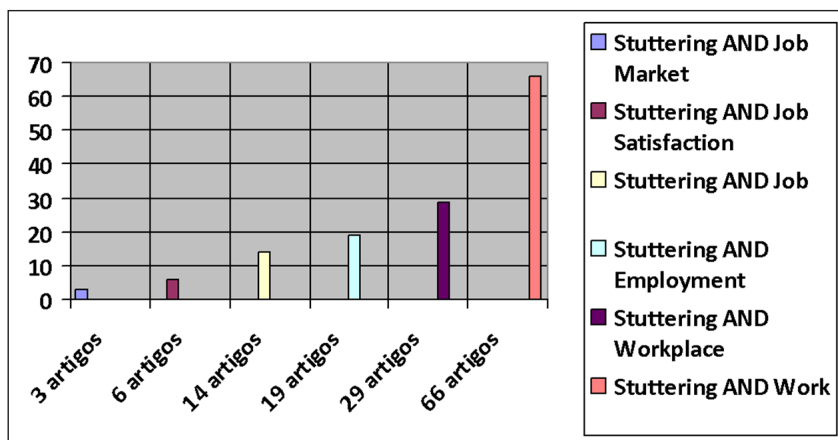


Figure 1. Steps for selecting articles used as reference

Process development

During the search, 2001 articles were identified. After reading the titles and abstracts, the number of articles was reduced to 137, distributed according to Graph 1.

Graph 1. Number of articles selected after review, according to descriptor combinations



Of the 137 articles selected after reading titles and abstracts, 7 were unavailable, which resulted in 130 articles for analysis. All works were stored in Mendeley reference management software, which identified duplicates among descriptors. After reading the 130 documents in full, 19 were selected to compose this review. The reduction in the number of articles was due to the exclusion criteria and the elimination of duplicates.

After analyzing the works, themes were identified that were not directly related to our descriptors, but that pointed to previous social barriers that had an impact on work performance.

These articles included themes related to previous social barriers and indicated studies in their bibliographic references, among which we included 5 relevant productions, totaling 24 articles in the present review.

Data identification and analysis

Based on the central axis of the research and the analysis of the 24 articles, we selected the following themes:

- Stuttering and work
 - Stuttering, stigma and discrimination
 - Stuttering, Intersectionalities, gender, and racism

- Predecessor social barriers to work performance
 - Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering
 - Stuttering, disability and legislation
 - Stuttering and identity
- Health care: stuttering and work
- Stuttering and University

Results

The final sample of this review consisted of twenty-four scientific articles, selected according to previously established inclusion criteria. Of these, 16 articles were published in Health magazines (Fluency-9; Disability-4; General health and psychology-2; Occupational Medicine-1), 06 in Language and Communication magazines, 01 in a Legislation magazine and 01 in a Human Resources magazine. 21 of the articles were published between 2018 and 2023; 02 between 2009 and 2014 and 01 in 2004. Regarding methodology, 16 articles had a qualitative approach: a) the majority through interviews and questionnaires with PWS; b) 02 literature reviews; c) a meta-ethnography. Eight articles had a quantitative approach.

Chart 1 represents the specifications of each of the items.

**Chart 1.** Articles collected on the CAPES Journal Portal on Barriers and Facilitators for inclusion at work.

	Article title	Authors	Newspaper	Theme	Considerations
1	Stuttering's Effect on Job Efficacy in Five Participants.	Rafique, S. et al	The Therapist J Therap Rehabil Sci.;4(1):46-50; 2023	Stuttering and Work Stuttering stigma and discrimination	Stuttering has a negative impact on work performance and employment. Fluent people often make fun of PWS
2	Stuttering experience of people in China: a cross-cultural perspective	Yan Ma et al	Journal of Fluency Disorders, Vol. 77, 2023	Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering Health care: stuttering and work	Public awareness campaigns to promote knowledge about stuttering can counteract myths and false beliefs that lead to the stigmatization of PWS. In clinical care with PWS, it is essential to consider different cultural and linguistic groups.
3	Stuttering: Stigma and perspectives of (dis)ability in organizational communication	Seitza, S. R.; Choo, A. L.	Human Resource Management Review, Vol. 32, Issue 4, 2022	Stuttering stigma and discrimination Stuttering, disability and legislation Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering	One of the biggest challenges for PWS is stigmatization in the workplace. Stuttering is a unique disability in its overlap with language and communication processes, which affects occupational identity, which values the effectiveness of communication in organizations. Strategies adopted by organizations can change and reduce stigma, such as stuttering being attributed to stress and anxiety, as if it were under the control of the speaker.
4	Self-reported impact of developmental stuttering across the lifespan	Boyce, J.O et al	Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 64(10), 1297-1306, 2022	Stuttering and work	Stuttering severity scores were higher in participants who reported that stuttering had an impact on their education and/or employment, compared with those who felt it had no impact.
5	Assessing the psychosocial impact of stammering on work	Parsons, V. et al	Occupational Medicine, 72(2),125-131, 2022	Stuttering and work Health care: stuttering and work	The adverse impact on job performance and satisfaction due to stuttering impacts professional self-identity and self-confidence at work, with avoidance behaviors to minimize exposure to speaking situations. Workers were unaware of the availability of the Occupational Health sector to assist them. Still others were concerned that their stuttering would not be taken seriously by this sector.
6	Public attitudes toward stuttering in Malaysia	Chu, S.Y. et al	J Fluency Disorders, Dec;74:105942, 2022	Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering.	In Malaysia, public beliefs regarding stuttering are more negative than those in Western nations.
7	Preliminary study of self-perceived communication competence amongst adults who do and do not stutter	Werle, D.; Winters, K.; L.; Byrd, C. T.	Journal of Fluency Disorders, 70, 2021	Health care: stuttering and work	Stuttering treatment must consider communication competence in everyday speech situations, as PWS report lower levels of self-perceived communicative competence in relation to fluent speakers.
8	Australian attitudes towards stuttering: A cross-sectional study	Lefort, M. K. et al.	Journal of Fluency Disorders, Vol. 69, 105865, 2021	Health care: stuttering and work. Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering	In PWS therapy, negative public reactions to stuttering and the educational role to increase awareness of the impact of negative public attitudes towards stuttering should be considered.
9	Stigma and the Hispanic stuttering experience: A qualitative study	Dean L; Medina AM	J Commun Disord. Jan-Feb; 89:106056, 2021	Stuttering, stigma and discrimination. Health care: stuttering and work.	The knowledge that Hispanic PWS experiences with stigma are affected by cultural and linguistic factors allows therapists to broaden their approach and adopt more supportive behaviors.
10	Disability or Identity? Stuttering, Employment Discrimination, and the Right to Speak Differently at Work	Gilman, J.	Brooklyn Law Review Vol. 77 (3), 2012	Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering. Stuttering and identity Stuttering, disability and legislation.	Transfluency situates stuttering as a manifestation of diversity in speech patterns, a model of identity, just as being black, homosexual and left-handed are expressions of racial diversity, sexual orientation and hemispheric domination. The inclusion of speech as an important life activity makes it essential that stuttering is considered a disability under disability legislation, which currently only includes muteness. While the identity model is the fairest way to combat discrimination, the disability model is the most practical method because it can be covered by existing legislation.





	Article title	Authors	Newspaper	Theme	Considerations
11	Stuttering and Work: An Exploratory Study	Hernández Rosado, M.; Martínez Lugo, M.E.	Rev Caribena Psicol. Aug 13, 2021	Stuttering and work Stuttering, stigma and discrimination. Stuttering and identity. Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering.	At work, PWS report loss of opportunities; harassment by colleagues; discomfort speaking in meetings. However, they also report confidence in their abilities and feel that they communicate effectively. Organizations must have a more comprehensive view of what communicational diversity represents in the search for more inclusive management and diversity education.
12	Lived experience of people who stutter: a descriptive review of qualitative studies from 1990 to 2017.	Isaacs, D.; Swartz, L.	Disability and Society, 36(1), p. 81–99, 2021	Stuttering, disability and legislation.	Stuttering as a disability points to how attitudinal barriers impact the experience of disabilities, requiring an intersectional lens that includes the complex and intertwined categories of differences that affect PWS.
13	Examining the understandings of young adult South African men who stutter: The question of disability	Isaacs, D.; Swartz, L.	International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders, 57(6), 1304–1317, 2020	Stuttering, disability and legislation. Stuttering and identity. Health care: stuttering and work. Stuttering, stigma and discrimination.	Are social barriers or individual agency (or lack thereof) responsible for disability? Therapists need to recognize the social and political aspects of stuttering stigma.
14	'I Don't Have Time For This': Stuttering and the Politics of University Time	Isaacs, D.	Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research, 22(1), 58–67, 2020	Stuttering and university. Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering. Stuttering, disability and legislation.	The Academy needs to be more inclusive for people with disabilities, including communication disabilities, which involves educating students and teachers and technicians about stuttering and respect for those who stutter. In the context of neoliberalism, time is a commodity and its impact on people with disabilities involves the entire society.
15	The lived experience of stuttering: a synthesis of qualitative studies with implications for rehabilitation	Connery, A. et al.	Disability and Rehabilitation (Vol. 42, Issue 16, pp. 2232–2242), 2019	Health care: stuttering and work. Stuttering, stigma and discrimination	Professionals working with PWS need to address barriers such as workplace discrimination and stigma; understand the multifaceted nature of stuttering, avoidance, internalized thoughts and feelings.
16	The influence of workplace discrimination and vigilance on job satisfaction with people who stutter	Plexico, L. W. et al.	Journal of Fluency Disorders, 62, 2019	Stuttering, stigma and discrimination Stuttering, disability and legislation Health care: stuttering and work	Vigilance to guard against situations of discrimination at work is a social construction for a quick response to the threat. The barriers highlighted by the ICF (WHO) for the functions of speech fluency and rhythm provide the necessary argument for the inclusion of stuttering in disability legislation. Professionals can help PWS in job interviews by elaborating on their fears related to communication and increased surveillance. They can also provide legal knowledge about your employment and workplace discrimination rights.
17	Self-stigma and its associations with stress, physical health, and health care satisfaction in adults who stutter	Boyle, Michael P. Fearon; Alison N.	Journal of Fluency Disorders, Volume 56, Pages 112–121, June 2018	Health care: stuttering and work Stuttering, stigma and discrimination	PWS treatment programs must consider stress management for their well-being. If stigma is about social injustice, the social determinants of health must be investigated and effective anti-stigma programs must be adopted to improve public attitudes toward stuttering.
18	Stuttering and labor market outcomes in the United States	Gerlach, H. et al.	Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 61(7), 1649–1663, 2018	Stuttering and Work Stuttering, stigma and discrimination. Stuttering, Intersectionalities, gender, and racism	In the job market, stuttering is associated with disadvantages related to gender discrimination and stigma.



	Article title	Authors	Newspaper	Theme	Considerations
19	The impact of stuttering on employment opportunities and job performance	Klein, J. F.; Hood, S. B.	Journal of Fluency Disorders, 29(4), 255–273, 2004	Stuttering and Work Stuttering, stigma and discrimination Stuttering, Intersectionalities, gender and racism Stuttering and university Health care: stuttering and work	PWS realize that stuttering interferes with their chances of being hired and promoted, and harms their performance at work, due to discrimination. Therefore, they look for jobs that require little speaking or reject a new job or promotion because of their stuttering. Discrimination is independent of training, and some feel trapped in unwanted jobs to avoid exposing themselves or are prevented from giving oral presentations. Women perceive stuttering as less disabling for work than men. Non-Caucasians believe that stuttering plays a more negative role in the workplace than Caucasians. PWS with a higher level of education believe that stuttering is less disabling, because education leads to a greater understanding of one's potential; or did those who did not pursue further education feel limited by their stuttering? Stuttering therapy should include work and career outcomes for PWS.
20	Public attitudes toward people who stutter in the workplace: A questionnaire survey of Japanese Employees	Iimura D.; Miyamoto S.	J Commun Disord. Jan-Feb;89:106072, 2021	Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering.	Negative public attitudes influence PWS, at school or in the workplace. At the same time, contact with PWS in these spaces reduces public discrimination and negative attitudes.
21	Disclosure of a communication disorder during a job interview: A theoretical model	Isetti D.	J Commun Disord. Sep-Oct;87:106038, 2020	Stuttering and Identity	The visibility of symptoms is a relevant factor in the decision to disclose or not, in the workplace, that one has stuttering. Other factors include motivational factors, potential benefits, and also issues such as the location and type of work to be performed.
22	Judgemental Society and its Impact on the People with Stuttering: A Social and Legal Analysis (Special Focus on Stammering as a Disability)	Priyanshu, Jain	IJRAMT, vol. 2, no. 9, pp. 101–110, Sep. 2021	Stuttering, disability and legislation Stuttering, Intersectionalities, gender, and racism	The inclusion of stuttering as a disability has been avoided by the Indian Judiciary and Legislature, although there is legislation for people with disabilities, in addition to stuttering qualifying in the definition of disability in all senses. Many PWS are rejected in job interviews and have difficulties in professional advancement. They are judged by their flow of speech rather than their training/experience. Professionals who work in the vocal field are the most affected. Women who stutter are victims of a form of double discrimination in patriarchal and ableist societies and face further marginalization.
23	The attitudes of employers towards stuttering and people who stutter: Descriptive research	Caglayan, A.; Ozdemir, R.S.	T�rkiye Klinikleri Journal of Health Sciences, 7(2), 339–348, 2022	Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering. Stuttering, stigma and discrimination	Employers present negative attitudes and indicate that stuttering is an undesirable attribute, which can reduce the chances of employment for PWS, even those with higher education. Such attitudes are similar between PWS and those with physical disabilities, and are slightly higher towards PWS.

Stuttering and work

Studies of the impact of stuttering in the workplace reveal a potentially challenging event for PWS, generating difficulties related to verbal communication and the time needed to transmit information in certain situations. Scenarios such as meetings, presentations, interactions with clients,

negotiations, and communicating with colleagues and superiors can put additional pressure on people who stutter. This pressure has the potential to negatively affect work performance, undermine self-confidence and lead to anxiety and frustration, making career progression difficult.^{13,14,15}



Stuttering, Stigma, Discrimination

PWS are often seen as less competent, even though stuttering does not affect their technical or cognitive abilities.

PWS are sometimes overlooked for promotions, especially for roles that require leadership or communication skills, and even if they demonstrate competence in their roles, the stigma related to stuttering limits their chances of professional growth.¹⁴

Self-stigma in stuttering⁶, which occurs when a person internalizes negative stereotypes about themselves, is another relevant factor. When facing prejudice, people frequently adopt limiting roles, which leads to the validation of these stigmas. This reduces self-esteem and self-efficacy, perpetuating a negative view of oneself.

Stuttering, Intersectionalities, Gender, and Racism

In this review, 3 studies were found that address intersectionality, gender^{15,17,21} and ethnicity¹⁷. Both studies report an aggravating effect on stuttering, with females^{15,17,21} and non-caucasian race¹⁷.

Predecessor social barriers to work performance

Public lack of knowledge, discrimination, and stigma about stuttering

Studies point to the tendency to portray PWS as nervous and anxious, reinforcing the belief that it depends on the person themselves to control their anxiety and nervousness to become fluent. This conduct reinforces the simplistic and mistaken view that ignores the complex nature of stuttering, a neurobiological disorder of speech fluency. And it contributes to PWS suffering from discrimination from school to adulthood. There is a need for campaigns in favor of scientific clarification on the topic.^{18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33}

Stuttering, disability and legislation

Some studies point to stuttering as a type of differentiated disability, due to the overlap between language and communication and the high level of stigmatization faced by PWS.^{22,28} In this sense, stuttering must be legally recognized as a disability, to guarantee rights and protection for PWS.²⁸

Stuttering and identity

In addition to disability, some studies emphasize that it is essential to adopt an identity approach to stuttering.^{30, 31}

Thus, a new perspective on stuttering can evolve, based on the concept

of transfluency, recognizing it as a manifestation of diversity in speech patterns, similar to racial, sexual or hemispheric dominance diversity. Based on the ideas of Antônio Bispo dos Santos: “Transfluence is the law that governs the relationships of transformation of the elements of nature and teaches us that not everything that mixes come together” (Santos, 2015, p. 89).³²

This concept allows stuttering to be considered in a broader sense of disability, which can underline social and legal spheres. In view of this, studies³¹ conclude that to advance the inclusion of PWS, it is necessary to transform the way disability is understood in the workplace and in society in general.³¹

Health care: stuttering and work

Studies point to the need for health professionals to consider cultural and linguistic differences, as well as affective and cognitive components, in addition to technical aspects.^{23, 35}

Because stigma has a considerable impact on the psychological health of those who stutter, coping strategies are required for the formation and maintenance of self-image, in the face of avoidance behavior and internalized feelings of shame and frustration. They also emphasize the therapeutic contribution aimed at deciding whether to disclose the condition of being a PWS in social or professional environments.^{16,22,25,36}

In the scope of occupational health, it is necessary to evaluate the guidelines regarding specific adaptations in the workplace, such as adjustments in the communication environment, changes in work practices or flexibility related to presentations and meetings; as well as implementing awareness programs with the aim of educating employees about inclusion and diversity.³⁶

Stuttering and university

Studies argue that education and formal knowledge allow overcoming perceived limitations and assist in self-knowledge and opportunities¹⁷. To achieve this, the university needs to consider diversities, especially those of communication, including stuttering.³⁷

Creating a supportive environment for college students who stutter requires fostering a culture of awareness and respect throughout the academic community. This involves educating students, teachers, and technicians about what stuttering is, demystifying misconceptions and reducing the stigma associated with the condition. For this to happen, it is important to know that speaking times need to be respected and dialogical shift alternations followed.³⁷

Discussion

From the analysis of the 24 articles selected in this research, 4 major themes related to PWS, in the context of work, were categorized: Work, Social Barriers, Clinical Care and Education.

The limitations found in this study refer to articles published primarily in the English language, originating from the global north, and few articles published in social and/or legal journals. The justification for that can be the fact that the theme is maturing, by discussions still in consolidation and involving disputes of interests from various governmental and non-governmental segments.

Among these 24 articles chosen, there were no Brazilian studies, as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. This absence compelled us to examine this event. When analyzed, the national scientific publications found discussed other no less important topics: developmental stuttering in childhood; disfluency and stuttering; speech therapy evaluation, performance and therapy; biological foundations, theoretical and causal reflections; areas of linguistics (speech analysis, mainly) and other noble areas of Speech Therapy related to fluency, especially hearing and voice. The frequency of research and studies found, therefore, is regulated by the relevance of the developmental problem; plurality of causal aspects and the involuntary and intermittent nature of stuttering.

This theme covered by health can justify that of the articles picked, 67% were found in health journals, despite the theme requiring changes within human resources, law and social sciences.

Another dimension of the result found is the thematic currentness, since of the articles selected in this review, 21 (87.5%) are recent articles, above the year 2018. This demonstrates that the issue of stuttering and work is a current discussion, and that it urgently needs to be studied further.

Research reveals that stuttering is multifaceted and is not limited to a communication disorder, being a condition affected and aggravated by psychosocial and structural factors.

Among the main elements found is time at work, which appears as a communication barrier, an unfair exchange currency in a corporate world, which requires agile communication and perfect aesthetics, as pointed out by Acton⁷. Plexiglas¹⁶, Rafique *et al*¹³ and Parsons *et al*¹⁴ identified, in their studies, social pressure in the workplace for verbal performance (fluency, speed and productivity). This condition impacts both professional satisfaction and career development.

In the same sense, Isaacs³⁷ shows that in a neoliberal society, time is treated as a commodity, which implies that the value of each person's time varies according to their ability to meet efficiency standards. This view perpetuates the notion that those who cannot adapt to the rhythms or patterns of fluent communication are somehow wasting time, which devalues their contributions.

Other categories associated with work, found in this research, are discrimination and stigma.^{14,17,19,20} Erving Goffman's work⁸ inaugurated discussions about the genesis of stigma, discrimination, self-stigma and social interactions. Goffman analyzed subjects perceived as "non-conforming", who defy pre-established standards of behavior.

Link e Phelan expanded the field of study initiated by Goffman, mainly in relation to the need to understand stigma beyond individual attitudes. Therefore, considering the social dimension that is rooted in power structures, and which requires a systemic and multiple analysis.

Stigma is presented by the authors as a mark, an attribute of the individual, differentiating itself from discrimination, which occurs in an action by another in the relationship with the stigmatized subject.

In this context, the review shows that PWS are stigmatized as less competent^{14,15,18,20}, even if stuttering does not interfere with your technical or cognitive skills. Such a mistaken perception discriminates against these people in terms of access and development in the job market.

PWS often internalize and validate the negative stereotypes attributed to them, experiencing self-stigma^{6,8}, which reveals the depth of the impact of stuttering in the professional environment, by amplifying the challenges already faced.

The intersection of stuttering, gender and race allows us to observe that the discriminations experienced overlap and are related^{38,40}. In this review, Gerlach *et al*²¹ brought to light the more severe impact of stuttering on women's careers; and Klein and Hood¹⁷ describe that non-Caucasian workers who stutter believe that stuttering has a more negative impact on the work environment than Caucasians.

This dimension reinforces the multifaceted nature of stuttering and demands an approach that considers the social determinants of health as a contributing factor to structural barriers. In this sense, expanded strategies are required that can guarantee equity and inclusion in the lives of PWS.³³

An understanding that can advance towards confronting barriers, brought by Gilman²⁸, it is transfluency that defines stuttering as a “dramatically different speech pattern”, but “as human or as natural as fluent” (Gilman, 2012, pg.1210). Thus, the real problem lies in the social stigma surrounding stuttering. PWS are often banished to the “closet”, that is, they are marginalized, repressed by gestures, mockery and looks of disapproval, all determined by prejudices and lack of knowledge, manifested and constructed by society. According to the concept of transfluence, this personal identity, often marked by pain, frustration and shame, finds freedom in acceptance, like other forms of diversity. Acceptance dignifies human expression and invites PWS to free themselves from social repression, and coming out of the “closet”, as expressed by Gilman²⁸, in which it proposes a change of perspective in which, instead of trying to correct, it incorporates diversity in communication.

Public ignorance about stuttering contributes to the distorted common sense that this fluency disorder is something that can be controlled or eliminated with willpower. When the media endorses the idea that stuttering is related to weakness or lack of courage, social stigma is reinforced, which contributes to the marginalization of PWS, especially when it occurs in environments such as school and work.^{22,26} This fact is noticed in studies carried out in different societies.^{18, 23, 24, 25}

Therefore, there is a need for public awareness campaigns with the aim of neutralizing myths and false beliefs that lead to the stigmatization of PWS.

Another attitude that moves in the same direction is direct contact with PWS, as knowledge and interaction favor the understanding of the specific-

ties that characterize this group, beyond the myths and prejudices. Thus, negative stereotypes tend to disappear, resulting in a more empathetic and informed perception of society.²⁷

Studies^{18, 25} also highlight the importance of specialized care adapted to the needs of PWS, both in clinical and occupational contexts, advocating a comprehensive and sensitive approach to the particularities of each individual.

The challenges faced by PWS are also related to their categorization as a disability, which, in many aspects, involves the need for specific legislation. These thoughts touch on the uniqueness of stuttering as a disorder that affects communication and language processes in a particular way, requiring differentiated treatment and understanding.^{22, 28}

This change in perspective can lead to greater respect, dignity, and appreciation for PWS, in search of a more inclusive and equitable work environment for those who stutter and for other people with conditions that impact their communication capabilities.^{22, 28}

Employers associate workers' stuttering with their incompetence and other myths and untruths, failing to evaluate PWS real skills and qualifications, resulting in discriminatory attitudes.^{17,21,25,30} In this sense, the lack of legal action not only perpetuates discrimination against PWS, but also highlights the need for studies and legal solutions that guarantee the inclusion and protection of those who stutter, in the job market and in society in general.^{15,28} It is therefore essential that legislation not only protects them from discrimination but also recognizes attitudinal factors as significant barriers.

Therefore, it is essential that stuttering is legally recognized as a disability, with due consideration to its unique nature, which involves both communication difficulties and the effects of social stigma. This would enable a more inclusive and appropriate approach for those who stutter, both in their work environments and in their social interactions.

There is a significant legislative gap in many countries, including Brazil, which reflects the need for a global approach to guarantee the rights and legal protections that PWS deserve. These legislative gaps leave PWS without adequate legal protection, exacerbating the difficulties they face daily. Without formal recognition of stuttering as a disability, those who stutter are vulnerable to discrimination, with little or no form of legal redress.

In this direction, Priyanshu¹⁵ highlights that while the United Kingdom already has laws that guarantee the rights of PWS, India has not yet adopted a legal approach that guarantees their inclusion and protection.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health is a tool from the World Health Organization (WHO) that can support legislation and is widely used to understand functionality and disability in a biopsychosocial context. This action broadens the understanding of stuttering, treating it not only as a speech disorder, but also as an issue that involves environmental and social barriers, which can lead to policies to address this.^{16, 41}

According to Isaacs³⁷, ableist attitudes, in the context of the university, perpetuate the pressure for everyone to adapt to a norm of temporal efficiency that disregards individual needs and differences. The author further argues that students should “correct” their own time, which reflects the underlying assumption that the time of people with disabilities — in this case, someone who stutters — is considered less valuable. This exposes the university as a social structure that privileges speed and efficiency, marginalizing those who cannot adapt to the aforementioned standards.

Final considerations

This literature review identified, in the studies found, a centralized focus on the barriers faced by PWS, which limit their communication function and contribute to ableism, which makes it difficult to access and remain in the workplace; but they also pointed to possible resources and facilitating strategies.

As the method chosen by most of the authors reviewed was conducting interviews or questionnaires with the PWS, the results indicate that the group studied faces various adversities. On the other hand, during the analysis of their production, the authors detected associations, which allowed the development of possible solutions.

From the results found, it is inferred that, to build a more inclusive society, it is essential to advance in three main areas: education, legislation and public awareness about stuttering.

Education, in this review, proved to fall short of its liberating potential, by reproducing the discriminatory extramural world from basic training

to university. The advances sought in the issue of racial diversity, gender, and some disabilities have promoted changes that prove that it is possible, through education, to build a more egalitarian world. The review shows the possibility of including the communicational diversity that occurs in stuttering, so that the difference in the temporal factor ceases to be a barrier in respect for communication.

Education must go beyond technical and clinical training and encompass the training of professionals and the general population, to demystify the stigma associated with stuttering. At the same time as it acts to strengthen identity, it is liberating through knowledge and contact with PWS.

Legislation, in its protective function, guarantees rights to people with disabilities. Stuttering, in turn, is included in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as a fluency disorder, specifically in chapter 3, item b330, which deals with the functions of fluency and speech rhythm⁴¹.

In this sense, although the ICF does not define stuttering as a disability, in some countries, it is used as a reference to include stuttering in this framework. This inclusion is advocated by some scholars, not only due to the impact of stuttering on speech fluency, but also due to the significant stigma faced by people who stutter (PWS). Guaranteeing the rights of PWS, protecting them from discrimination and expanding their work opportunities are essential measures to promote justice and inclusion.

Public awareness plays a crucial role in transforming social perceptions when it comes to overcoming the stigma and prejudices that marginalize PWS. It can be promoted in various segments of society, such as the inclusion of communicational discrimination in the fight for identity issues; in the work of speech therapists and other health professionals with lectures and clarifications, in addition to the clinical part; in the academic training of health professionals who are unaware of the topic and its needs and characteristics; in PWS families with schools and other family members, for their support and guidance on how to deal with stigmatizing issues and discriminatory attitudes; between others.

A good example to be cited is the International Stuttering Awareness Day on October 22nd, when campaigns promoted by various academic and clin-

ical sectors and Non-Governmental Organizations take place. These campaigns encourage empathy through the promotion and execution of actions focused on the topic, elucidating and valuing the inclusion of communicational diversity.

The present study can contribute to the recognition of the barriers and facilitators experienced by PWS, by presenting interdisciplinary aspects in the spheres of public education; of workplaces; in the legislative and therapeutic scope, which address the impact of communicational differences related to the social and emotional aspects of stuttering. The barriers are numerous, but they can be addressed by actions that develop autonomy and respect for speaking time, providing PWS with a dignified life in which they can exercise their potential with equality.

Bioethics of Care, by offering a relational and empathetic approach, can act on this dialogical fracture, promoted by a culture in which time in its rigidity does not allow differences. Being able to point out paths favorable to the development of PWS, at the personal and professional levels, arising from social justice. Understanding stuttering through this ethical and functional lens expands the field of action, beyond medical and clinical speech therapy issues, towards human rights.

Therefore, for effective change to occur, it is necessary that stuttering is seen as part of human diversity, and not as something to be corrected or hidden.

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