

TREATMENT DECISION MAKING: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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This presentation will provide a summary of the previous five presentations in this symposium. On the background of the topics presented in this symposium discussions with participants will be stimulated in the following areas: (1) How can and should available evidence on recovery rates, genetic bases of stuttering, and decision schemata, be used in therapy? Preschool children, older children, and adults differ not only with respect to recovery rates but also with respect to the therapy goals and the available therapy procedures to be decided upon. Thus, different decision schemata are relevant for different age groups. (2) What further research is needed to extend our knowledge about the cerebral basis of stuttering and individual differences in genetic endowment, personality, and environmental factors? (3) Does existing knowledge about recovery rates and their determinants allow us to formulate recommendations for the timing of early intervention? (4) In which way could self-reported strategies of recovered former stutterers be exploited to optimize stuttering therapies, in which way are such strategies related to cerebral repair mechanisms, and how might stuttering therapies with adults be influenced by information about recovery in adulthood? (5) How can genetic information be used for decisions related to the diagnosis of subgroups and to differential treatment approaches for children and for adults? (6) It is generally accepted that developmental variables, primarily the degree of chronicity of stuttering and the stage of language development are relevant for the assignment of different therapy approaches. However, are there in addition to these developmental variables other individual differences to which stuttering therapies should be tailored and does existing knowledge already justify therapy guidelines?