Commercialization Path for SpeechVive™

INITIATIVE

Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences faculty member Jessica Huber has developed SpeechVive™, a simple behind-the-ear device that is used to treat communication disorders associated with Parkinson’s disease. The device detects when the wearer is speaking and plays background noise (similar to a room full of people talking) in his/her ear. This noise elicits a reflex called the Lombard Effect, which is an involuntary reflex that causes people to talk louder, slower, and more clearly when exposed to a loud environment. All of us have experienced the Lombard Effect in our lives. The improvement in speech resulting from the use of the SpeechVive™ is triggered subconsciously and does not require the patient to focus on adjusting their speaking behaviors.

Huber’s development of this technology has been facilitated through her participation in the Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy and support provided by the National Institutes of Health (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders), the Institute for Biomedical Development at Purdue, the Indiana CTSI, and the Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering.

Huber recently completed a clinical study of the utility of the SpeechVive™ in 39 patients with Parkinson’s disease. 90% of the participants demonstrated improvements in speech loudness, clarity, and rate as a result of using the SpeechVive™.

SpeechVive, Inc raised $700,000 in Series A round of funding from Ambassador Enterprises for the commercial production and sales launch of SpeechVive™ in the U.S. The SpeechVive device is expected to be on the market by the middle of 2014.

Huber’s work as a Purdue faculty entrepreneur was the basis for her selection as the 2012-13 Burton D. Morgan Center Faculty Entrepreneur in Residence. She currently serves as the Faculty Fellow for Entrepreneurship at the Burton D. Morgan Center. Huber says, “I want to use my experiences in entrepreneurship to bring effective behavioral treatments to the market to improve the lives of individuals living with communication disorders.”