

Why Aphasia Research Matters:

Stroke rates are rising, especially in younger people:

The overall stroke prevalence rose by 8% from 2011-2021 with a more significant increase for people ages 18 to 44 (14.6%) and ages 45 to 64 (15.7%). This trend indicates that more people across diverse age groups are at risk of experiencing aphasia, often facing long-term challenges in communication and independence. This underscores the urgent need for advancing aphasia research, as strokes are one of the primary causes of this language disorder.

In the US, approximately 2 million people live with aphasia

The disorder not only impacts individuals, but also places immense emotional and financial strain on families, caregivers, and healthcare systems. Through research, we can better develop innovative treatments and enhance rehabilitation approaches, ultimately improving the quality of life for those affected.

Investing in aphasia research not only empowers individuals to reclaim their voice, but also equips society with the knowledge to provide more effective support to those facing language barriers due to brain injury.

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All About Aphasia



All About Aphasia:

What is aphasia?

Aphasia is a language disorder caused by damage to the language center of the brain, which affects a person's ability to communicate.

What causes aphasia?

Aphasia is most commonly caused by strokes, but any damage to the communication centers in the brain can cause the disorder including traumatic brain injury, brain infections, tumors, and other brain disorders.

What are common symptoms?

- Speaking in short or incomplete sentences
- Speaking in sentences that don't make sense
- Substituting one word for another or one sound for another
- Speaking unrecognizable words
- Having difficulty finding words
- Not understanding other people's conversation
- Poor reading comprehension
- Poor writing comprehension

Does aphasia affect intelligence?

A common myth about aphasia is that it affects people's intelligence. While individuals with aphasia may struggle with speaking, understanding, reading, or writing, their cognitive abilities, personality, and memories are often intact. Aphasia is strictly a language disorder that impairs the ability to communicate

Treatment for Aphasia:

Aphasia treatment primarily focuses on speech and language therapy, as there are no medications that cure the disorder. Recovery from aphasia is often a challenging and gradual journey, requiring time, patience, and persistence. Long-term therapy with a speech-language pathologist is the most effective approach, helping individuals relearn language skills, develop alternative ways of communicating, and regain some degree of independence in daily interactions.



What we do at the Aphasia Recovery Lab:

We study how aphasia affects one's ability to produce and comprehend speech, as well as what factors and learning conditions maximize language recovery in persons with aphasia.

Currently, we are interested in questions like:

- How do persons with aphasia and persons without aphasia use different cues during sentence comprehension and production?
- How do different learning conditions modulate immediate and long-term language improvement in persons with aphasia?
- Can implicit learning-based treatments generate as effective outcomes as traditional treatments to improve communication in persons with aphasia?
- What neural and cognitive (e.g., memory, attention) functions support different types of language learning?

We use various methods such as eye-tracking while listening while speaking and language treatment studies. The long-term goal of our research is to develop cost-effective intervention approaches for individuals with aphasia and related acquired language disorders.

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