



Fluency Disorders: Current Practices and Perspectives of Speech-Language Pathologists

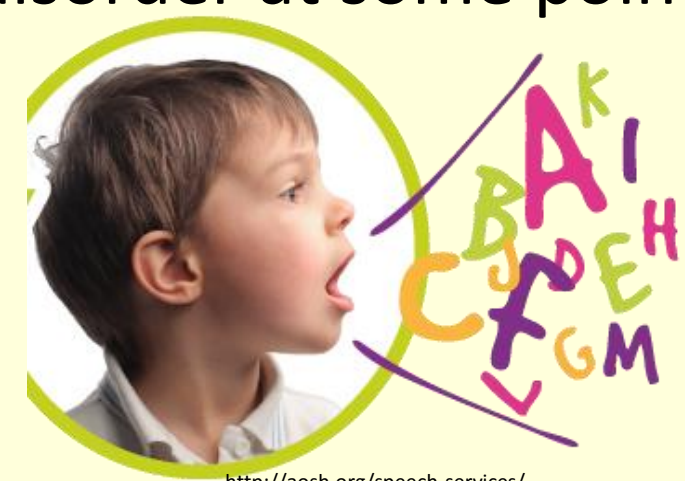
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Background

INTRODUCTION

Stuttering is a fluency disorder which refers to disruptions in the forward flow of speech. Worldwide, 1-2% of people have a fluency disorder, and around 5% percent have or had a fluency disorder at some point in their life (Guitar, 2014).



This relatively low prevalence presents a challenge to preparing speech-language pathologists (SLPs).

In fact, it is possible to complete a Master's degree program without obtaining any clinical experience assessing or treating fluency disorders (Yaruss, 1999; Yaruss & Quesal, 2002). Further, approximately 67% of public school-based SLPs report to having worked with students who have a fluency disorder (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2014).

STUDY AIMS

1. To identify SLPs perspectives and knowledge of treating fluency disorders.
2. To identify the need for continuing education resources for practicing SLPs.

Methods

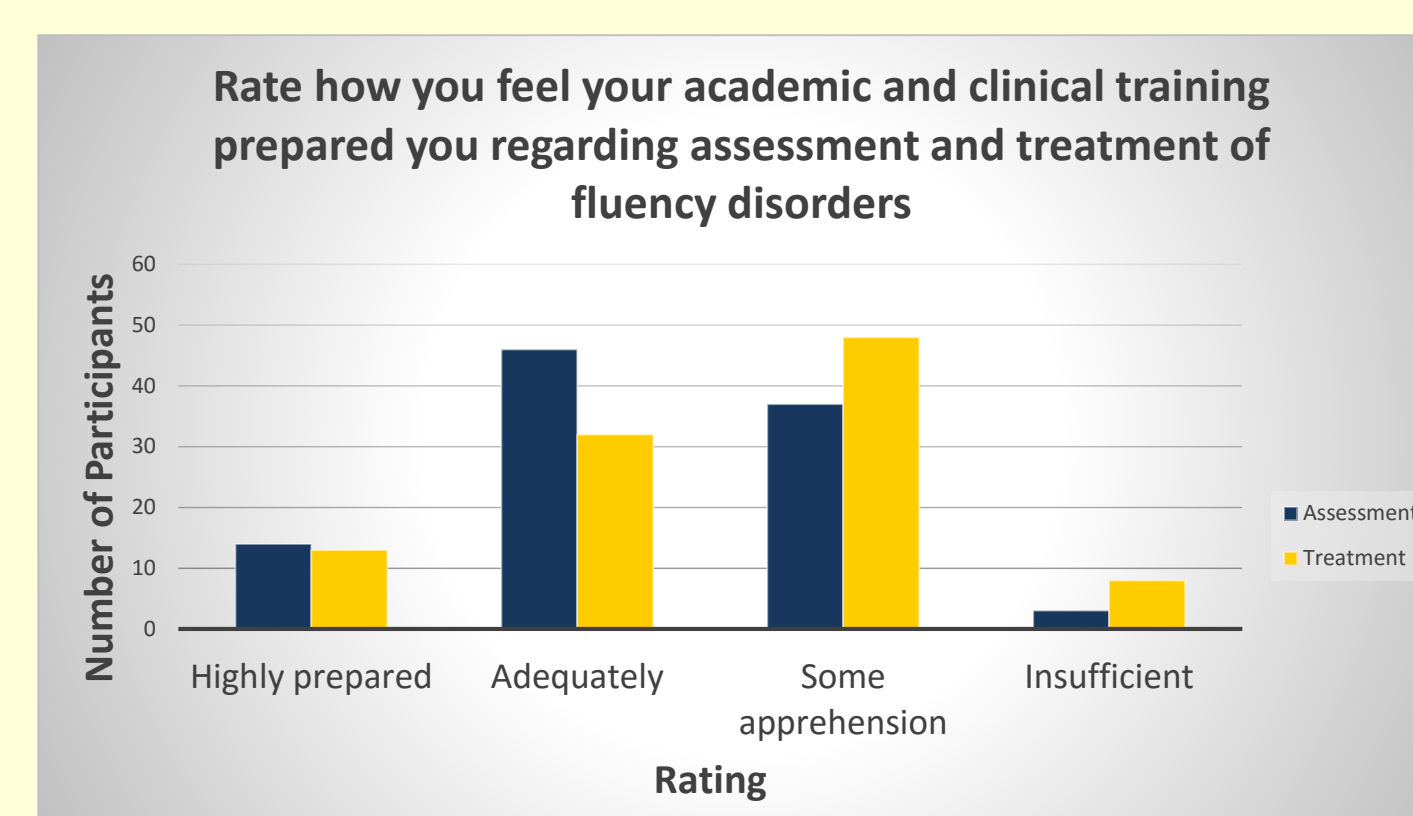
Online survey emailed to SLPs working in MN and WI

PARTICIPANTS

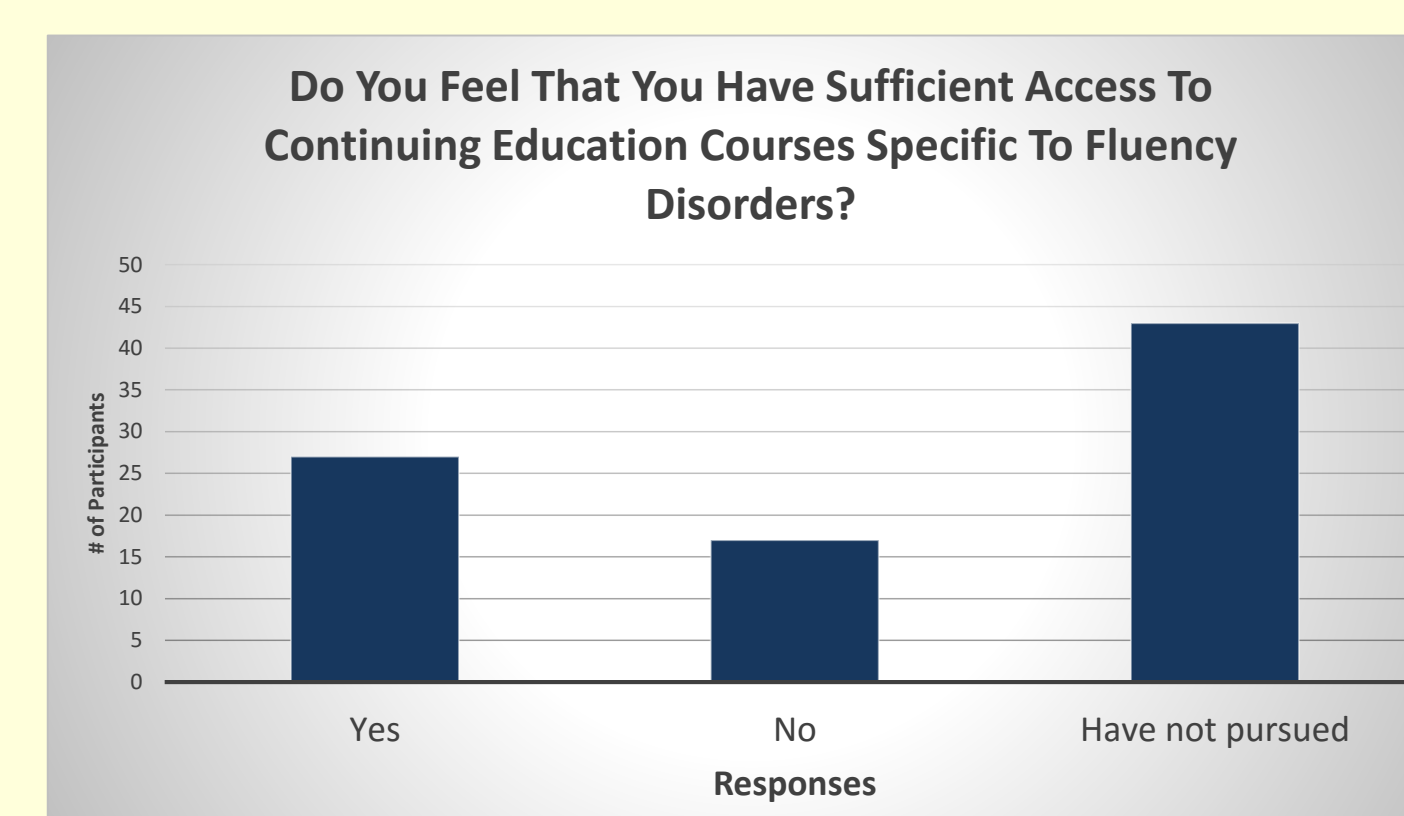
- 168 initial participants
 - N=87
 - 51.7% return rate
- All had a Master's degree
- N=72 currently employed in a school setting
- N=81 employed full-time

Results

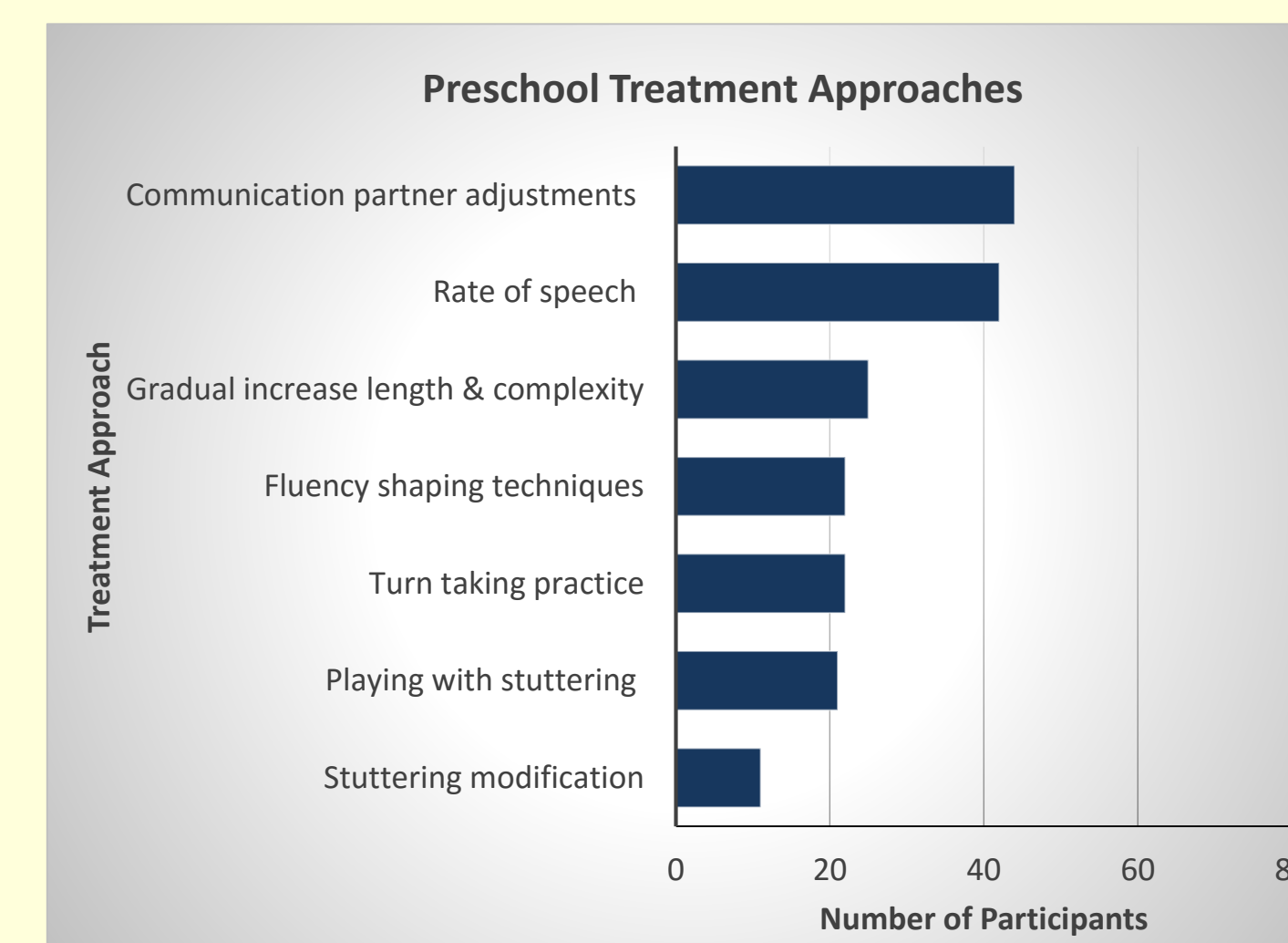
SLPS' CONFIDENCE



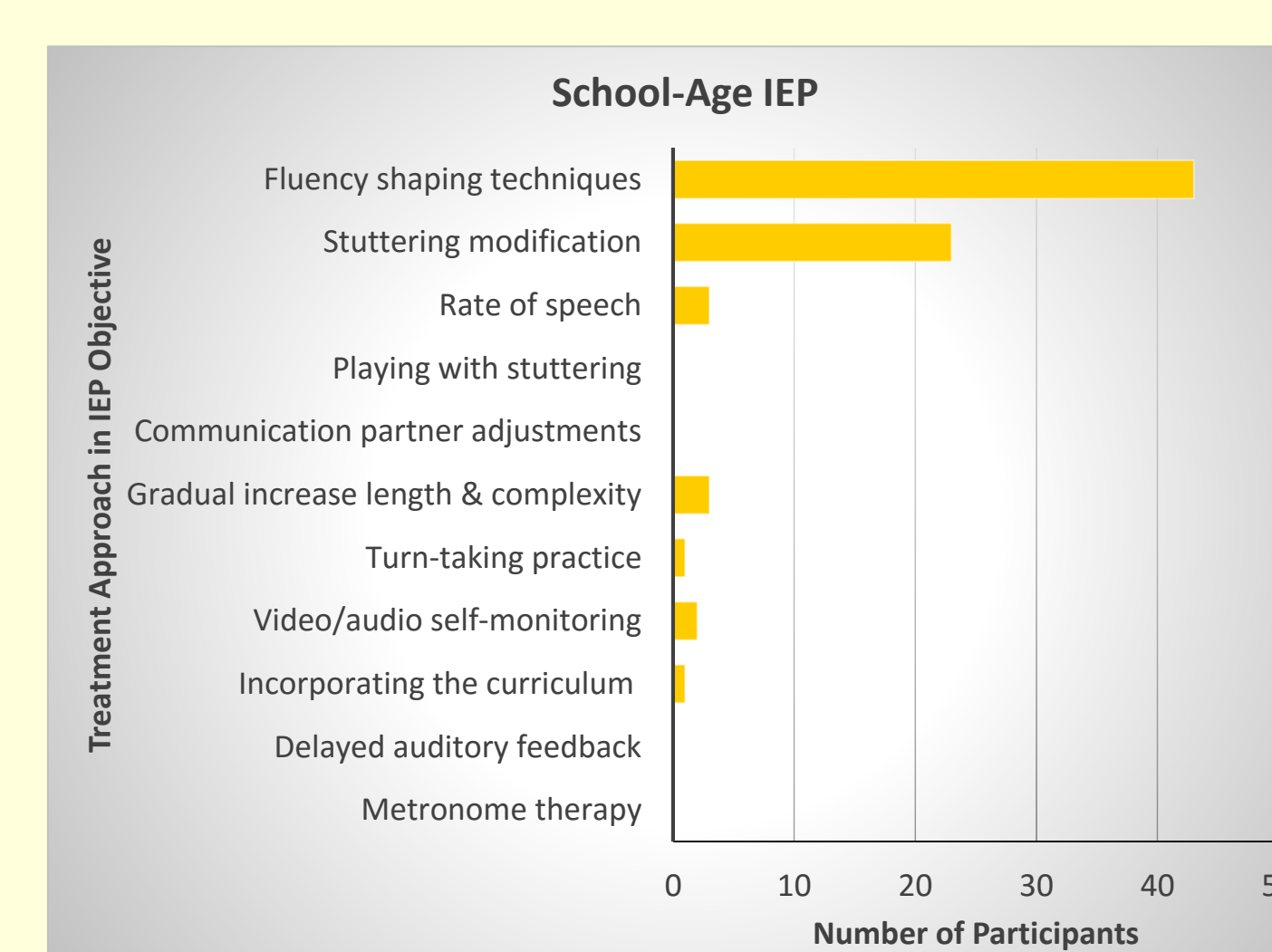
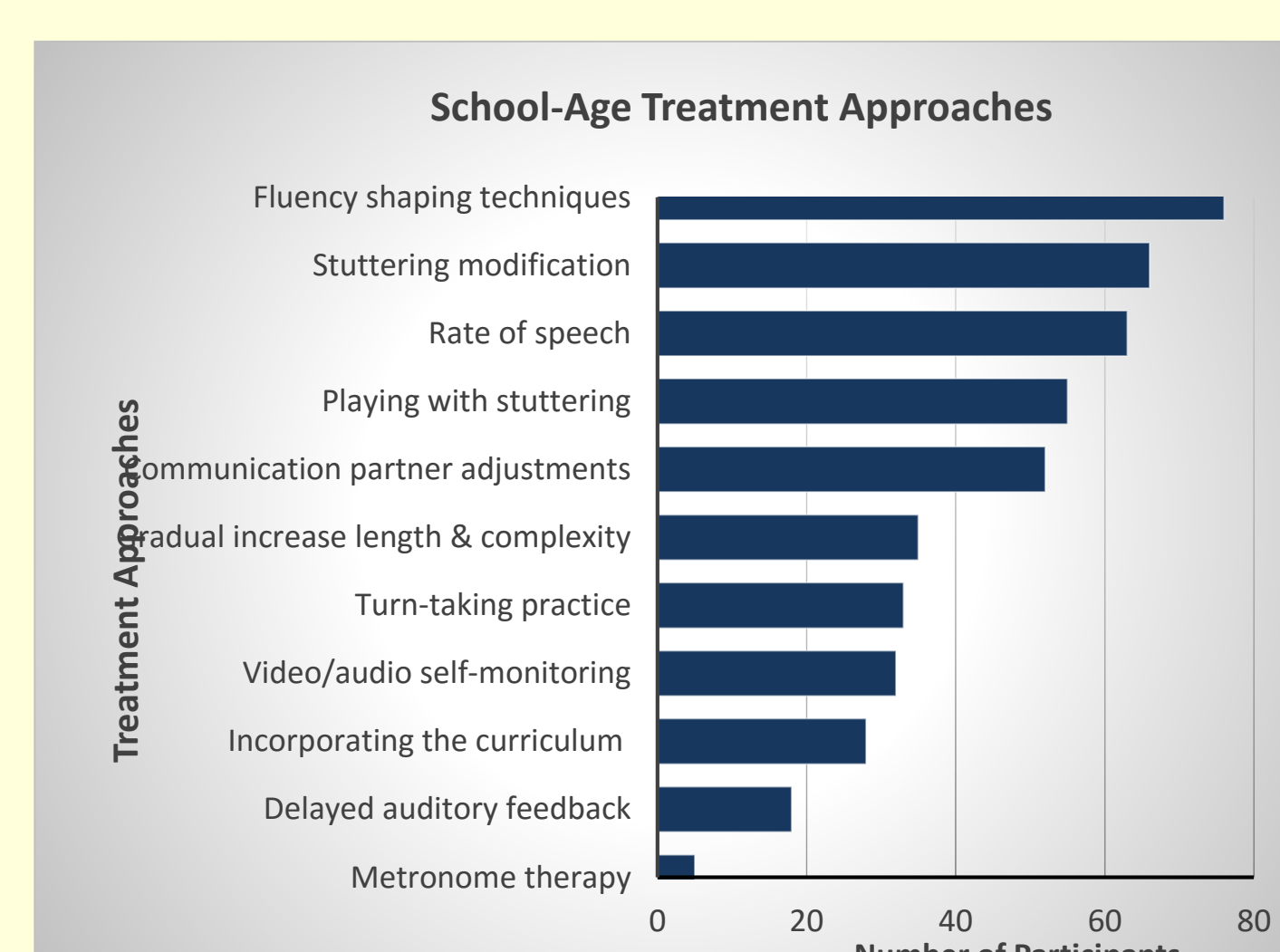
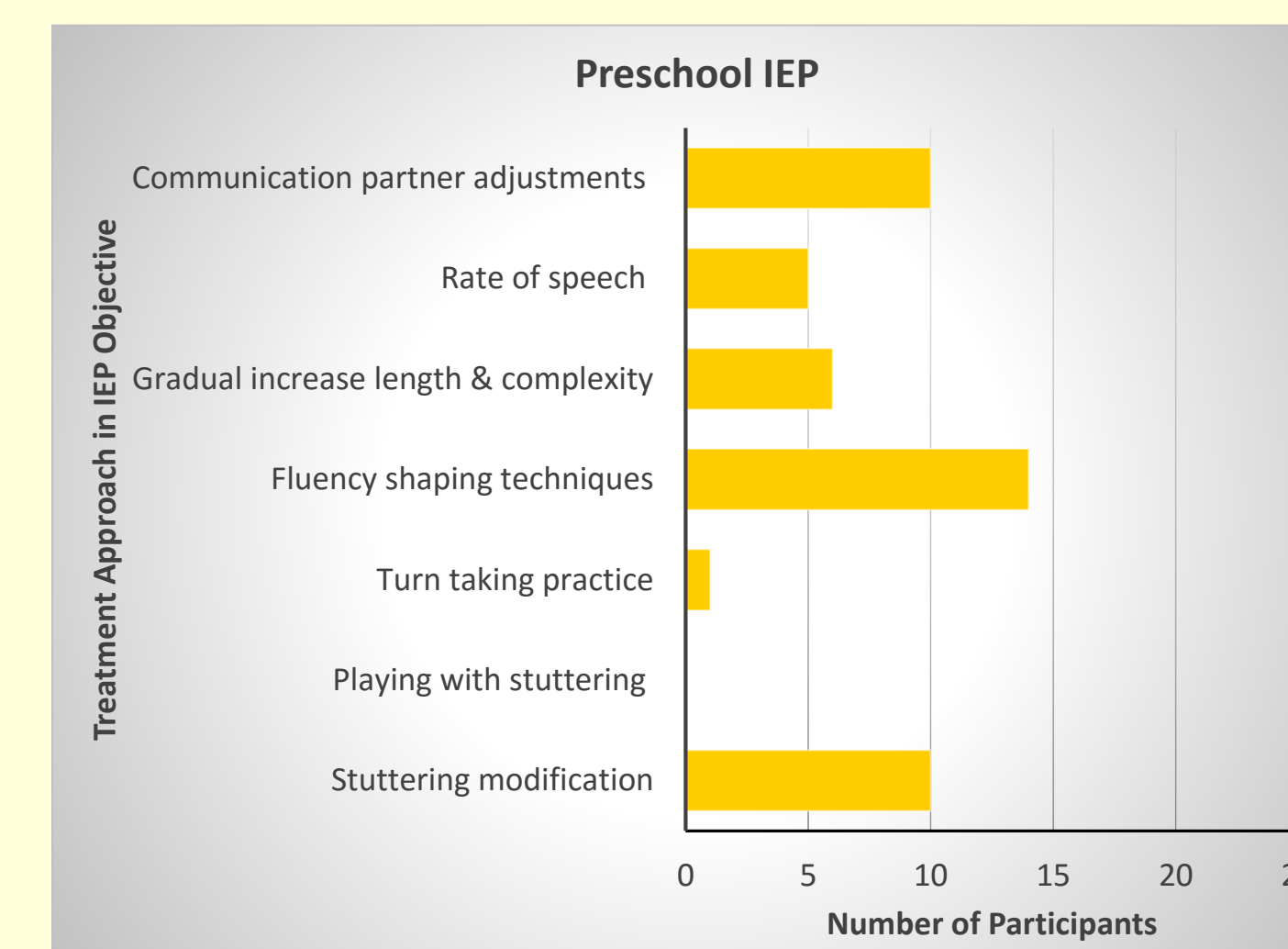
SLPS' CONTINUING EDUCATION



SLPS' TREATMENT PRACTICES



SLPS' IEP OBJECTIVES



Discussion

CONCLUSIONS

- SLPs felt more prepared when providing services for assessment rather than treatment to clients with a fluency disorder.
- SLPs consistently reported well-matched and evidence based treatment techniques for school-age children who stutter.
- Some SLPs identified less appropriate treatment techniques for preschool children who stutter.
- Most SLPs, (69%), are not pursuing continuing education regarding fluency.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

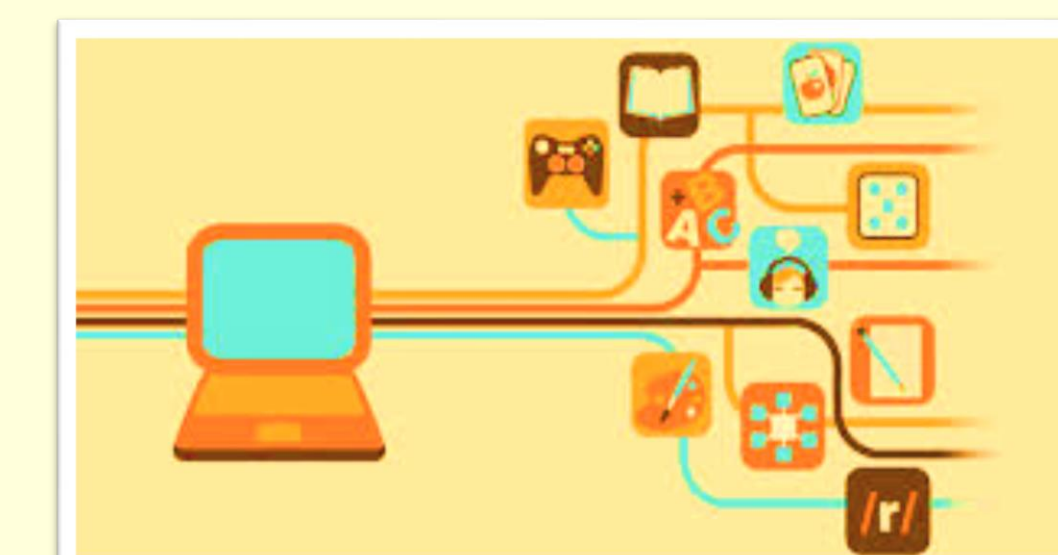
- Understanding and application of service delivery to school-age children who stutter is well-matched to current research and recommended practices.
- Some SLPs working with preschoolers who stutter may be applying school-age principles of practice.
- SLPs working with children are most eager for professional development in the area of stuttering if it can be available online.

LIMITATIONS

- Response bias
- Regional restriction

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Increase exposure by providing more clinical cases of clients with a fluency disorder.
- Make a mandatory continuing education course for fluency.
- Offer online continuing education opportunities.



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No financial or non-financial relationships to disclose.

References

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Guitar, B. (2014). *Stuttering: An integrated approach to its nature and treatment*. (4th edition). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
Yaruss, J.S. (1999). Current status of academic and clinical education in fluency disorders at ASHA-accredited training programs. *Journal of Fluency Disorders*, 24, 169-184.
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