Assessing the information needs of speech therapists working in the French Community of Belgium in order to improve a course on Evidence-Based Practice at the University of Liège

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1. Introduction
Two years ago, a course on Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) was integrated into the speech therapy curriculum at the University of Liège. We decided to analyze speech therapists’ needs in order to adjust the educational program to current working conditions and to address challenges faced by clinical practitioners.

2. Methods
An online exploratory survey was launched with 2028 members of two Belgian associations of French speaking speech therapists (ASELF and UPLF) and with 40 practitioners working in collaboration with the University of Liège as supervisors to speech therapy students.

3. Major results

**Fig. 1: Process(es) used to solve the last clinical problem**

- Relying on personal experience: 81%
- Discussing with colleagues in the workplace: 77%
- Consulting a personal library: 71%
- Searching scientific articles on the internet through a general search engine: 56%
- Discussing with an expert in the discipline: 47%
- Searching the internet to find sources of information other than articles: 46%
- Discussing with colleagues but not in the workplace: 33%
- Searching in specialized databases (e.g. Medline/PubMed): 6%
- Asking an academic library: 5%
- Delegating the search to a third party: 5%
- Asking a public library: 3%
- Using another approach: 19%

**Fig. 2: Barriers to accessing scientific information**

- Lack of time: 54%
- Lack of competence in English language: 45%
- Lack of knowledge of available sources: 44%
- Difficulty in accessing specialized search tools: 40%
- Difficulty in selecting relevant documents: 40%
- Difficulty in accessing the scientific quality of information: 37%
- Difficulty in assessing the scientific quality of information: 37%
- No barrier: 28%
- Lack of skills in using specialized search tools: 28%
- Barriers other than those cited: 2%
- No barrier: 7%

**Fig. 3: Frequency of access to scientific information**

- Never/Exceptionally: 16%
- Once every three months: 33%
- Once a month: 37%
- At least once a week: 14%

**Fig. 4: Level of importance of EBP for the 12.4% of respondents who knew that approach**

- Essential: 15%
- Interesting but not feasible: 23%
- Interesting: 37%
- No opinion: 37%

**Fig. 5: Training interests**

4. Discussion
The survey gathered a large amount of additional data, which still need to be analyzed. Nevertheless, as recommended by Guo et al. (1) and by Nail-Chiwalu & Bernstein Ratner (2), we can already conclude that efforts need to be made to help speech therapists to develop their skills in information literacy. On the one hand, educational programs should provide EBP courses in order to anticipate the challenges of professional life. On the other hand, continuing education activities should also be offered to professionals in order to support decision making and to transform them into models for the next generation.

5. References