

SpeechEasy Efficacy Study Launched by Auburn University Researchers

Study Will Determine Long-Term Benefits of Advanced Speech Fluency Device for People Who Stutter

Auburn University, Alabama – November 16, 2004 – Researchers at Auburn University's Department of Communication Disorders today announced the launch of a study to determine the long-term efficacy of the SpeechEasy electronic fluency device as a therapeutic option for people who stutter.

The study will be conducted at the Auburn University Speech and Hearing Clinic (AUSHC). Researchers led by Lawrence Molt, Ph.D., associate professor and department chair, will evaluate data collected from 45 individuals who stutter. Test subjects will be divided into two groups -- a 35-member experimental group that will use the device, and a 10-member control group.

Dr. Molt and his research team will evaluate fluency measures such as percentage of stuttered syllables obtained in a variety of speaking conditions. They will also use attitudinal scales to measure the effect of the device on lifestyle and quality of life.

Measurements of the experimental group will be conducted at one month, three month, six month and one-year intervals. SpeechEasy is designed to augment conventional speech therapy by helping people who stutter speak more fluently with less effort. It is the first portable electronic fluency device that can be worn entirely in the ear canal.

"The study launched today will hopefully provide some of the scientific data necessary to help determine SpeechEasy's long-term value in helping people who stutter improve their fluency, as well as their quality of life," said Dr. Molt. "The study is designed to replicate typical fitting patterns for the device and to evaluate consumer usage patterns, the effectiveness of the device, and consumer satisfaction via various forms of efficacy data. The use of multiple assessment periods and the overall duration of the project should provide a substantial amount of long-term efficacy data across a significantly large group of adults who stutter."

Similar in appearance to a hearing aid, SpeechEasy helps reduce or even eliminate stuttering by altering how the user hears his own voice. The device uses Altered Auditory Feedback (AAF) to recreate a natural phenomenon known as the "choral effect." This effect occurs when an individual's stutter is reduced or even eliminated as he speaks in unison with others. When someone speaks while wearing a SpeechEasy device, words are digitally replayed in his ear with a very slight delay and frequency modification.

AAF in its various forms, including Delayed Auditory Feedback (DAF) and Frequency Altered Feedback (FAF), has been the subject of rigorous peer reviewed study for the treatment of stuttering for more than 50 years. Only in recent years has technology made it possible to produce an electronic AAF device that is small enough to be cosmetically appealing and worn regularly.

While the new Auburn study will test SpeechEasy's long-term effects, a smaller, four-month study published last year in the prestigious *International Journal of Language Communication*

Disorders (Vol. 38: 1-21, 2003) reported that SpeechEasy reduced stuttering significantly and helped produce speech that was more natural.

A subsequent, much larger study published in the *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research* (Vol. 27:167-170, 2004) presented data that suggests the SpeechEasy device provides users with the ability to generate fluent, natural-sounding speech with minimal effort.

The findings of these two earlier studies are consistent with a recent independent survey of existing SpeechEasy users, of which 80.6 percent of the 489 who responded indicated that they were satisfied with their decision to obtain the device. In addition, 90.6 percent indicated that they would recommend SpeechEasy as a treatment option.

Today's announced study is funded by Janus Development Corporation, which markets the SpeechEasy device. The Auburn University Speech and Hearing Clinic (AUSHC) serves as an unbiased evaluator. Dr. Molt and AUSHC have no financial ties with Janus Development Corporation, do not distribute or market SpeechEasy devices, and have no vested interest in the outcome of the study.

About SpeechEasy

SpeechEasy is a portable and inconspicuous fluency-enhancing device that can help people who stutter speak more fluently with less effort. It is available in a variety of styles and models that are custom fitted and programmed for each individual user. The device was developed by a team of communication disorder researchers at East Carolina University, and is marketed by Janus Development Group. SpeechEasy devices are available exclusively via a nationwide network of state licensed, ASHA (American Speech-Language Hearing Association)-certified speech language pathologists. More information about SpeechEasy is available at www.speecheasy.com.

About Auburn University and AUSHC

Auburn University is a comprehensive research institution with nearly 23,000 students and 6,500 faculty and staff. Ranked among the top 50 public universities nationally, Auburn is Alabama's largest educational institution, offering more than 230 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree programs.

The Auburn University Speech and Hearing Clinic (AUSHC) was established in 1947 and has served the people of east Alabama for over 50 years. The clinic provides assessment and treatment services for the full range of clients from infants through the elderly. Larry Molt, Ph.D. serves as associate professor and chair of Auburn's Department of Communication Disorders. He is an ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) board recognized fluency specialist and coordinator of ASHA's Special Interest Division on Fluency and Fluency Disorders. He is also on the Executive Board of the International Fluency Association. Dr. Molt was selected as the 2003 speech-language pathologist of the year for by the National Stuttering Association.