



INTRODUCTION

- Youth have some of the highest concussion rates, yet this age group is underrepresented in concussion research
- Current concussion research and services rarely consider communication difficulties and their effects on sociocultural aspects of daily life
- Post-concussion communication difficulties include: motor-speech disorders, stuttering, cognitive-communication difficulties, disordered reading and writing (SAC Concussion Position Statement, 2019)
- Research is needed to learn about the impact of post-concussion communication difficulties from the perspectives of youth and their family members
- Research question:** What are the effects of post-concussion communication difficulties on daily life for youth, including impacts on: a) daily routines; b) participation in school/work and community activities; c) relationships with family members; and d) relationships with peers?

STUDY DESIGN

- Methodology:** Qualitative collective case study (Stake, 2006)
- Theoretical Framework:** Ecocultural theory (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993) provides a framework for the exploration of environmental and sociocultural factors
- Participants:** 5 youth (15 – 24 y) and 3 invited family members

We are currently collecting data and conducting preliminary analysis

- Data Collection:**
 - 1) Communication questionnaires
 - 2) Multiple (3-4) in-depth semi-structured virtual interviews
 - 3) Participant generated materials representing experiences of post-concussion communication difficulties including: photos, poetry, original artwork and diary entries
 - 4) Family member virtual interviews
- Analysis:** Engaging in reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) we aim to develop an in-depth understanding of individual case experiences and participants' collective experiences

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- How and why youth communicated were directly and indirectly affected by concussion
- Four conceptual categories representing the ways that youth and their family engaged in avoidance, adaptation and accommodation activities in response to changes in communication were identified
- Youth and their families (re)negotiated:

1) Physical Spaces: *"I couldn't handle the lights in the classroom, I couldn't handle reading, I couldn't keep up with my notes or the speed the teacher was going at...I basically lost contact with all my friends. Since I only hung out with them at school, being taken out of school meant that I didn't talk to them or hang out with them at all."* – Lily

2) Sociocultural Factors: *"I didn't want to be one of those people that was like 'oh I didn't get my notes' ... I swear I'm not a lazy student I just can't comprehend what this professor is saying."* – Gladys

"People stopped talking to me. I was telling them that this doesn't mean that they need to stop waving or saying hi to me. Sometimes I go alone. Because of the concussion, I was not open, they couldn't talk to me, whenever they see me feel that... for me it felt like you are trying to avoid me, you were trying to push me aside." – JJ

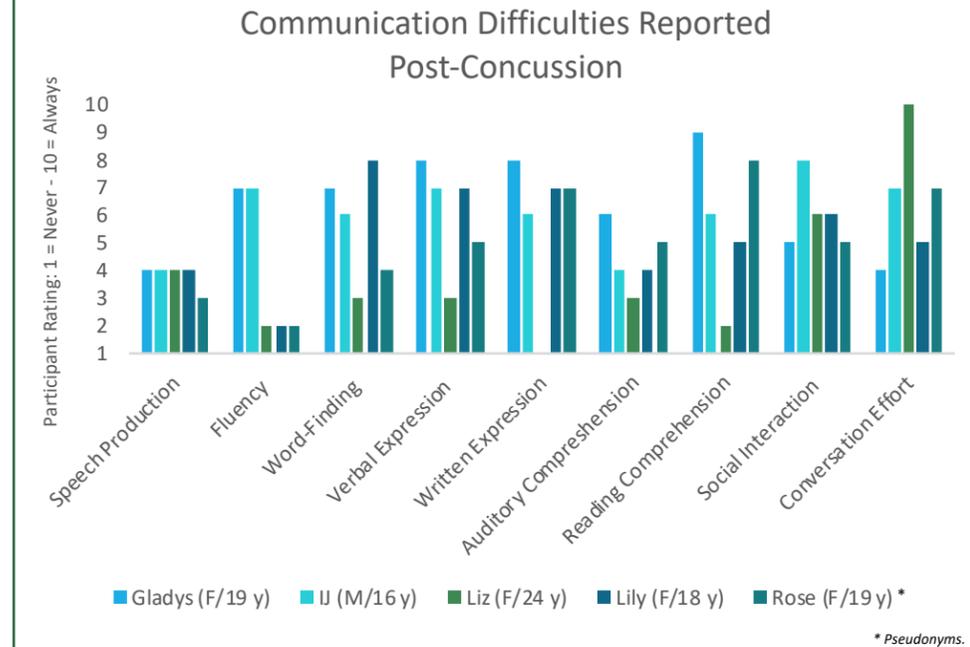
3) Relationships: *"Then [after the concussion] I started noticing ...I have no messages on my phone - usually I have so many from her."* – Taylor (Family Member)

"I used to be very chatty. I always found that I needed to talk about stuff and a lot of my friends were the type before that we're always looking for my opinion and talking, and so I feel like there's been a shift in what I look for in a friend...Since the concussion I look for people that don't really expect me to be that active in the conversation, just kind of happy to just be there and hang out and if we talk, we talk if we don't talk that's fine too." – Lily

4) Feelings about Self and Concussion Recovery: *"I really just didn't want to talk to anyone, because I felt embarrassed about having to take extra time to think about what to say."* – Gladys

"Not being able to rely on your own mind to remember things, not being able to think about things and reading things, and stuff like that, and have it just click ... it's like you're fighting through like thick mud to try and grasp the concept." – Rose

PARTICIPANT PROFILES



IMPLICATIONS

- Communication is central to how youth participate in their daily activities and maintain relationships with peers and family
- Changes in communication that occur after a concussion can have a significant impact on how youth feel about themselves and interact with others in their physical spaces
- An ecocultural perspective offers clinicians a framework for inquiring about youths' social roles, cultural values, meaningful relationships and daily activities
- With a better understanding of the processes of avoidance, adaptation and accommodation that can occur in response to post-concussion communication difficulties SLPs can help mitigate the impact of these changes by providing client and family focused communication interventions and education

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