INTRODUCTION

Although social environments do not cause stuttering, they play an important role in the way stuttering develops and how it is experienced. Literature implicates the attitudes of clients, their families and community towards speech and language disorders as vital to the treatment process. Studies have compared stuttering perceptions across the world and found that a wide range of beliefs and attitudes exist across cultures.2,3

SUDAN

Population: 30 million, 16% in Khartoum4
Culture: Afro-Arab, 97% Muslim, superstitious
Language: Sudanese dialect of Arabic
SES: Lower-middle income, 70% literacy4
SLP Services: Limited in scope, resources5

QUESTION and HYPOTHESES:

What are Sudanese knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes towards stuttering?

- H1: Sudanese will perceive negative personality stereotypes of PWS as being “nervous, shy, or fearful.”
- H2: The societal belief will be that stuttering is caused by “an act of God” and by “ghosts, spirits and demons.”
- H3: An imam (religious leader) and doctor will more often be seen as sources of help for PWS than a speech-language pathologist.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS:

- Sudanese adults (n=108)
- Mean Age: 30.1 yrs (18-63 yrs)
- Female 54%, Male 46%
- Education:
  - High School: 26%
  - Bachelor’s: 54%
  - Post-Grad: 13.5%

INSTRUMENT:

Public Opinion Survey on Human Attributes-Stuttering (POSHA-S)6
- Paper-pencil survey
- Created by IPATHA initiative
- Used in 12+ countries
- Translated to Arabic
- ~10 minutes to complete

RESULTS

Overall Impression

- Fig. 1: Stuttering had a marginally positive impression amongst general public relative to the other human attributes presented.

Amount of Knowledge

- Fig. 2: Respondents reported knowing the least amount of knowledge about stuttering. The most was known about intelligence.

Perceived Causes of Stuttering

- Fig. 3: (H2) 83% of respondents believed stuttering to be an “act of God” and only 3% attributed the cause to “Ghosts/demons/spirits.”

Sources of Help

- Fig. 4: (H3) Only 37% believed an imam to be a source of help for PWS while the majority of respondents believed an SLP to be a source of help for PWS.

CONCLUSIONS

- Overall impression of stuttering was generally positive relative to negative human attributes (i.e. obesity, mental illness).
- Negative personality stereotypes existed in slightly over half of the POSHA-S respondents.
- More likely in those with a bachelor’s degree or higher
- Vast majority, 83%, attributed stuttering to “an act of God” and only 3% to “ghosts/demons/spirits” suggesting a distinction between religiosity and superstition.
- Though God seen as most prominent cause of stuttering, a religious leader was not highest rated source of help for PWS.
- Participants received most of their knowledge about stuttering from personal experience, and the least from doctors, nurses, and specialists. This suggests the need for the dissemination of scientific knowledge on stuttering.

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References