

Title:

Speech-language pathologists' role with regard to diversity-related interactional dysfunction in healthcare environments.

Context:

Speech language-pathologists (SLPs) are trained to be astute observers of human interaction. As such, they are at an advantage when it comes to detecting interactional dysfunctions in healthcare settings; this advantage also extends to systemic issues that negatively impact patient-provider interaction. Such dysfunctions are frequently—but not exclusively—related to cultural and linguistic diversity, broadly understood as any cultural-communicative barrier between patients and providers. And thanks to their education, SLPs are also uniquely positioned to address them through targeted advocacy.

Objective:

The objective of this study is twofold: a) to typify interactional dysfunctions observed by one cohort of graduate SLP students (n=41) on their externship during the Summer 2019 semester; b) to typify advocacy approaches suggested by students to remedy said dysfunctions. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What kinds of interactional dysfunctions do SLP students observe in their placement settings?
- 2) What types of remedies do SLP students suggest?

Design:

Narrative data from students' reports will be subjected to a basic qualitative analysis, in which data are coded and similar codes are chunked into themes. Themes will be listed and explained to provide an overview of types of dysfunctions and remedies; specific examples will be given for each theme.

Conclusion:

It will be shown how and why SLPs' clinical skills make them uniquely effective as observers of interactional dysfunctions and as advocates for remedying such dysfunctions.