

## **Attitudes and knowledge of Sri Lankan speech and language therapists towards stammering**

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Literature has revealed that many Speech-Language Therapists (SLTs) tend to demonstrate negative stereotypical perceptions towards stammering and People Who Stammer (PWS) despite being professionals responsible for treatment for stammering. Many of them seem to be uncomfortable and less confident in working with PWS. This study aimed to explore the attitudes and knowledge of Sri Lankan SLTs towards stammering, its treatments, PWS, and parents of children who stammer. Survey data of 116 SLTs who completed Clinician Attitudes Towards Stammering (CATS) inventory was analysed. Overall, negative attitudes towards stammering were found despite the acceptance of multifactorial nature of stammering. SLTs demonstrated misconceptions about personality traits of PWS and their parents. Respondents felt confident of their ability to treat PWS effectively. However, they were not comfortable to work with PWS. They recognized parent counselling as a critical factor in the treatment of pre-schoolers and adolescents who stammer. Although teachers were perceived as being accurate in identifying students who stammer, SLTs were not confident in the teachers' ability to handle stammering behaviours and psychological ramifications. Promoting continuing professional development in the area of fluency disorders would be beneficial to both speech and language therapy students and practicing clinicians for eliminating their negative stereotypical perceptions of stammering and to improve their comfort and skills for treating PWS.

**Keywords:** stammering, speech and language therapists, attitudes and knowledge

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