

Does stuttering stop children from doing more than just speaking?

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(Medical Xpress)—Dr Lisa Iverach and Professor Ron Rapee AM from the Centre for Emotional Health, Macquarie University, are investigating the social and emotional impact of childhood stuttering.

Stuttering is a disorder that affects approximately 5% of Australians, and usually develops in early childhood when children are first learning to create sentences.

"While some children recover naturally from stuttering, the disorder can persist for others. Not only does it inhibit effective communication, it can be the source of bullying, teasing, [social isolation](#) and rejection,"

says Dr Iverach.

Previous research by Dr Iverach and the Australian Stuttering Research Centre, University of Sydney, has shown adults who stutter report increased social phobia, however virtually nothing is known about the presence of [social phobia](#) among children who stutter.

"We need to know whether school-age children who stutter experience the same [psychological difficulties](#) as adults, and at what age these difficulties begin to emerge," says Dr Iverach.

This is the first Australian study to assess [anxiety disorders](#) in children who stutter, and will be conducted in collaboration with researchers from Macquarie University, the University of Sydney, and the University of Newcastle.

Results of this research will help psychologists and speech pathologists gain a clearer picture of the social and [emotional experiences](#) of school-age children, and will contribute to the development of more effective treatments for children who stutter in the future.

The research team are seeking children aged 7-11 years, both those who stutter and those who don't, to participate in this research.

"We really want the community to become involved. Not just the families who have experienced stuttering in their children but also those who haven't, they can all play a part in helping us understand childhood stuttering," says Dr Iverach.

Provided by Macquarie University

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