

**OP 43**

**Use of spontaneous gesture patterns of people with aphasia at conversational level**

Jayathissa JHS, Bakmeewewa ADSA\*

*Department of Disability Studies unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.*

**Background:** Gestures are spontaneous hand and arm movements that are part of everyday communication. The roles of gestures are facilitating speech; particularly when Word Finding Difficulties (WFDs) occur.

**Objective:** This study aimed to examine the type of gestures used during WFDs by Person with Aphasia (PwA), and determine the relationship between WFDs and production of gesture patterns and, use of gesture among PwA as a successful repair mechanism in conversational breakdowns.

**Method:** Ten minutes the spontaneous conversation was conducted with Ten PwA and Ten HCs (Healthy Controls). Data were analyzed in two phases. Gesture patterns and word finding difficulties were thematically analyzed. The checklist used, analyzed for descriptive cross-sectional design to identify types of gestures use during the conversation, types of gesture used during WFDs by PwA, the relationship between WFDs and gestures production in conversational breakdowns with a communication partner.

**Results:** Twelve gesture patterns were produced by PwA. The referential, iconic character viewpoint, iconic observer viewpoint, and metaphoric gesture pattern were most used by PwA during the WFDs. Independent Mann Whitney U test showed that use of gesture patterns were significantly higher in PwA than in HCs ( $p < 0.01$ ). A positive correlation was seen between the gesture patterns and WFDs of PwAs ( $r = 0.99$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Those with aphasia used a higher percentage of gestures as a repair mechanism of communication breakdown than HCs.

**Conclusion:** The findings suggest that most of the gestures produced by PwA convey information for understanding their communication. These patterns suggest the opportunity for PwAs as targets of clinical rehabilitation.