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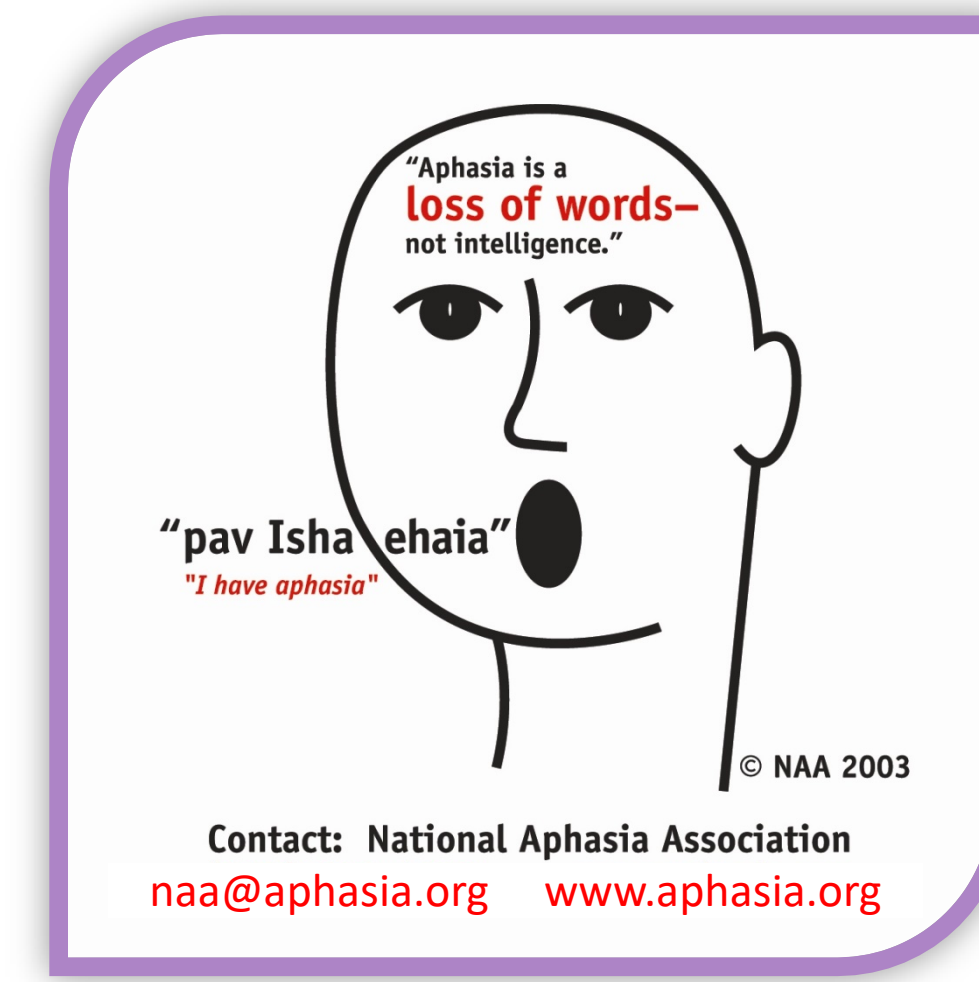
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PROMOTING APHASIA AWARENESS

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INTRODUCTION

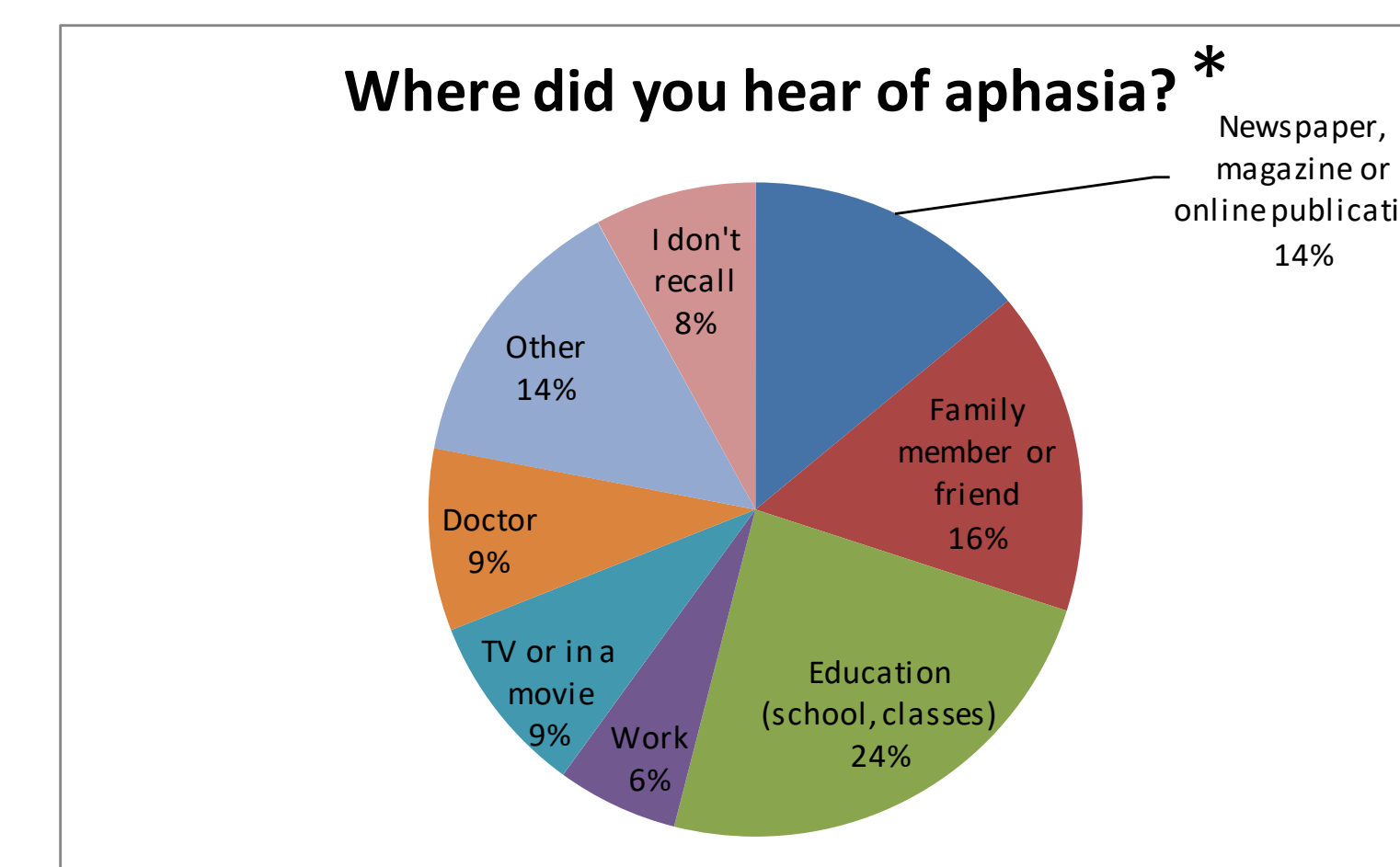
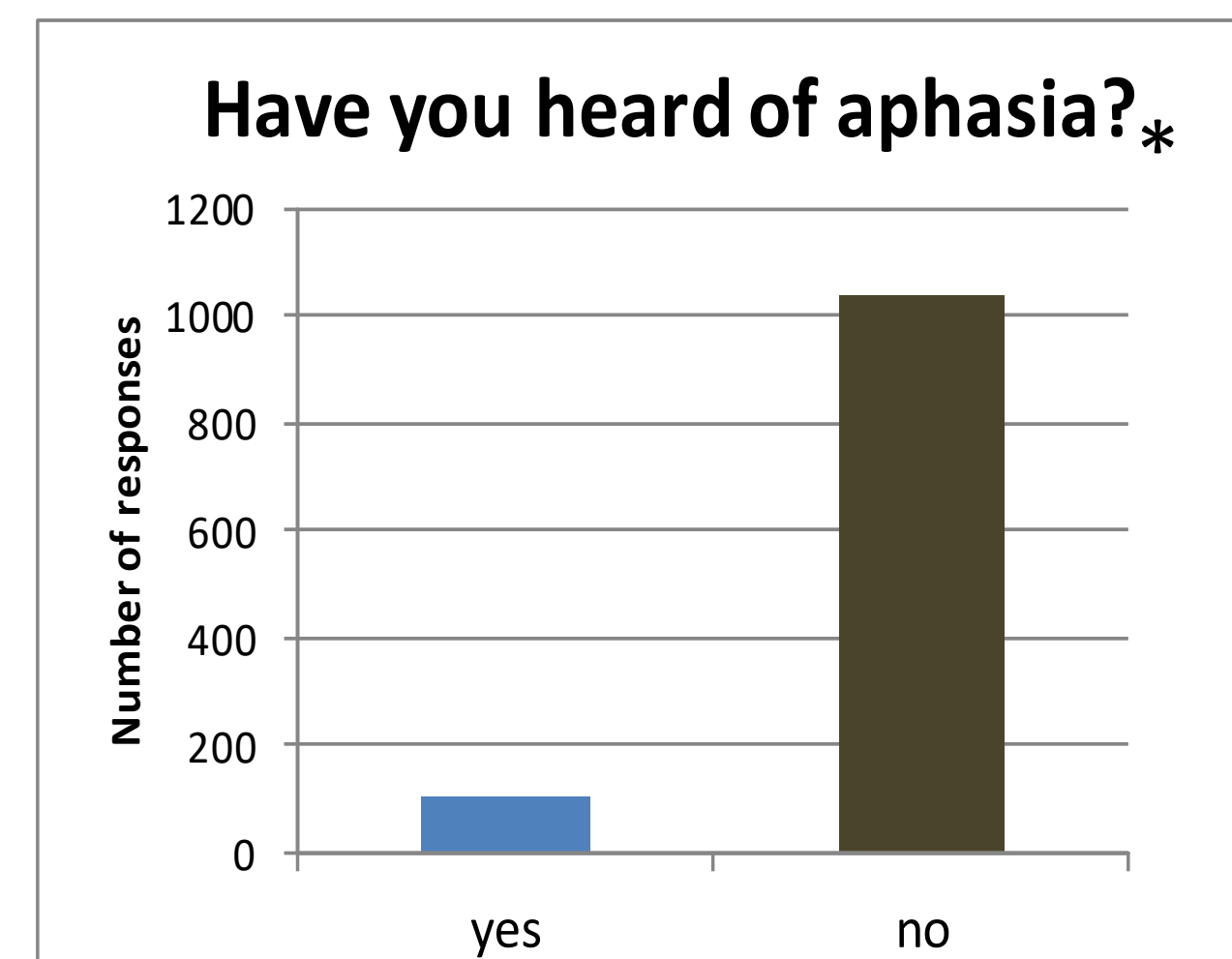
- Previous studies have shown that aphasia knowledge and awareness amongst the public is limited. As advancements in the medical community improve life expectancy for patients with aphasia, the prevalence of people with this disorder will only increase.
- Elman, Ogar, and Elman (2000) searched newspaper articles for the term “aphasia” and found that it was mentioned with much lower frequency than five other health conditions that have comparable (or lower) incidence rates.
- A 2016 survey by the National Aphasia Association suggests aphasia awareness continues to be low. Based on this information, we predicted that a search of recent newspaper articles would yield similar underrepresentation for aphasia.



WHAT IS APHASIA?

- A COMMUNICATION DISORDER TYPICALLY ACQUIRED AFTER A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.
- APHASIA IMPAIRS A PERSON'S ABILITY TO SPEAK, PROCESS LANGUAGE, READ AND WRITE.
- INCIDENCE OF NEW CASES IN THE U.S. IS 180,000 YEARLY.
- AFFECTS A PERSON'S ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE, NOT THEIR INTELLECT.

Data from a 2016 aphasia awareness survey by the National Aphasia Association - aphasia.org



*Survey respondents who heard of aphasia and knew it was a language disorder

RESULTS

- The results indicate an increase in the number of newspaper articles containing the term “aphasia.” However, consistent with Elman et al.’s study, aphasia continues to be underrepresented relative to other health conditions.
- Over the past 20 years the coverage of aphasia in the media has steadily increased, yet other health conditions are mentioned 5 to 20 times more often than aphasia.
- Autism received the greatest mention in newspaper media coverage, with nearly 115,000 newspaper stories in the last five years. Autism received more article mentions in 30 days (2,827) than aphasia received in the span of five years (2013 – 2017).

CONCLUSION

- The term aphasia remains underrepresented in newspaper articles and this trend has not changed significantly over the past two decades.
- What external factors may influence why some health conditions receive greater media coverage than others?
 - External factors such as celebrity advocates and controversial topics (e. g., vaccinations - autism)
 - Less media coverage means less grants and funding for services
 - Aphasia, as a communication disorder, may greatly hinder self-advocacy
- Increased familiarity with aphasia is critical for helping people with this communication disorder and their families. Further research is needed to determine ways to effectively raise public awareness of aphasia, lending support to people with aphasia and improving their quality of life.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does the frequency of newspaper articles mentioning aphasia compare with other health conditions that have similar incidence rates (e.g., Elman et al., 2000)?
- How has the coverage of aphasia in newspapers increased over the past 20 years relative to other health conditions?

METHODOLOGY

Nexis-Uni Database Search



Number of Newspaper Stories

Terms	Increments of Five Years (1998 – 2017)				Past 90 Days Jan 2018 – April 2018	Past 30 Days Mar 2018 – Apr 2018
	Jan 1998 – Dec 2002	Jan 2003 – Dec 2007	Jan 2008 – Dec 2012	Jan 2013 – Dec 2017		
Aphasia	32	368	1,651	2,524	117	40
Parkinson's disease	1,529	12,897	35,088	40,898	2,330	755
Stuttering	740	11,960	45,526	49,411	2,018	689
Multiple sclerosis	1,046	15,034	49,495	45,447	1,819	640
Autism	531	16,465	77,972	114,351	6,339	2,827
Muscular dystrophy	214	4,906	16,936	16,644	550	204

REFERENCES

- Elman, R. J., Ogar, J., & Elman, S. H. (2000). Aphasia: Awareness, advocacy, and activism. *Aphasiology*, 14, 455-459.
- National Aphasia Awareness Survey (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.aphasia.org/2016-aphasia-awareness-survey/>