Alprazolam, Citalopram, and Clomipramine for Stuttering

by John Paul Brady, M.D.

Stuttering is known to be a developmental disorder, with many experts agreeing on a strong neurological component. In an adult, stuttering is noted as speech behaviors such as repetitions and prolongations, often accompanied by great anxiety as he/she anticipates a speaking situation. This anxiety can make the speech behaviors worse, with some severe stutterers experiencing speech blocks and tremors of the lips and jaw, rapid eye blinking, and other body movements in their efforts to get their words out. Anticipating such struggle to talk often leads to more anxiety in future speaking situations and so the stuttering and the anxiety feed each other.

A number of drugs have been reported to reduce stuttering. (1,2) One of these drugs is alprazolam (Xanax), an anxiolytic agent. Included also are citalopram (Celexa), a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor, and clomipramine (Anafranil), another stronger serotoninergic drug. All three of these agents reduce stuttering in selective patients. However, only a minority of patients who stutter respond with increased fluency to any of these drugs. Those who do respond usually show only a very modest reduction in stuttering. We believe that adults with severe stuttering may require two medications, one directed at each component of the disorder.

To test this hypothesis, we undertook the treatment of Dr. A., a 57-year-old physician with a severe stutter since age 4 years. He scored 6 (severe stutter) on the 7-point scale for rating the severity of stuttering. He had tried numerous medications and therapy programs over the years, but had obtained only minimal improvement in his speech. His response to the combination of alprazolam (1.0 mg twice daily) and citalopram continued on page 8

Guitar Presented With Prestigious Malcolm Fraser Award

by Drs. Glyndon and Jeanna Riley

Barry Guitar, by virtue of his leadership in developing stuttering treatment, his extensive basic and applied research, and his dedication to improving treatment for people who stutter, received the year 2000 Malcolm Fraser Award.

This award, named after the founder of the Stuttering Foundation, is presented annually by SFA at the Fluency Division Leadership Conference. The award, which includes a $2,000.00 stipend, recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions to the community of people who stutter.

One of the letters of support noted that Guitar's career accomplishes a seamless joining together of clinical, research, and development of our profession. His leadership in clinical approaches and the importance of his research are interwoven with his impact on the development of our profession.

Barry Guitar has influenced many of us in the area of stuttering to view it in the context of the whole person. His respect for and honoring of the individuals with whom he works is evident in the statements expressed by colleagues.

Tendick Featured by Nationally Syndicated Columnist

Nationally syndicated columnist Dr. Robert Wallace featured Vanessa Tendick, the Stuttering Foundation’s 2000 National Stuttering Awareness Week Teen Spokesperson in his column appearing August 12, 2000.

Wallace’s excellent column, Tween 12 & 20, reaches an estimated 50,000,000 readers daily.

Wallace describes Vanessa’s approach to managing her stuttering through entering teen pageants and quotes her regarding advice to other teens who stutter.

"Be open with friends, family, and teachers about stuttering," she suggests. "Talk with parents and teachers about any needed help. It’s important not to hide stuttering." Last but not least, she counsels other teens, "Practice as often as possible."

Dr. Wallace includes information on the Stuttering Foundation resources for teens, such as the 80 page book, Do You Stutter: A Guide for Teens, and the videotape, Do You Stutter: Straight Talk for Teens, as well as the toll-free number and website address.

He closes this section of his column with the comment, “The Stuttering Foundation of America is one of my favorite organizations. The sole purpose of this wonderful nonprofit group is to help people overcome the trauma of stuttering.”

The Foundation is extremely grateful to Dr. Wallace for his help in reaching so many young people whose lives have been affected by stuttering.
Specialists Workshop Celebrates 14th Year

The Memphis-based Stuttering Foundation of America and Northwestern University hosted their annual instructional workshop for speech-language pathologists specializing in stuttering from July 10 through July 21, 2000.

Each year, 20 speech pathologists from around the world with a special interest in stuttering are accepted to participate in the workshop. Under the leadership of Dr. Hugo Gregory, the workshop is organized to focus on therapeutic skills and techniques for intervention with children and adults.

This year’s workshop participants come from the United States, Canada, Lithuania, Scotland, Argentina, France, and Sweden.

“We’re gaining new perspectives and are excited to return home with them,” added Vitma Makauskiene of Lithuania, Veronique Boucand of France. Echoed Elena Caffentzis of New York City, “I can’t wait to use the wealth of knowledge back home.”

Katie Dauer of St. Paul, Minnesota and B.J. Dow of Oklahoma City emphasized, “The workshop is a real turning point in our careers and the information, invaluable.”

“It was phenomenal,” remarked Kathy Swiney. “I learned a lot, met a lot of great people, and refreshed my enthusiasm for working in stuttering.” Added Anne Elsweiler of Utah, “This was the best professional experience I have ever had!”

Chris Gray of St. Louis noted, “This was one of the most amazing opportunities I have ever had to share and learn.” “I’m also very much looking forward to using my new skills and sharing knowledge with my colleagues,” enthusiastically noted Bernice Higgins of Victoria, British Columbia.

This unique workshop has gained international recognition for its excellence in the post-graduate study of stuttering.

For more information about this intensive workshop in 2001, write: Dr. Hugo H. Gregory, SFA, P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749, or call the Stuttering Foundation at 1-800-992-9392. Fellowships for the workshop are provided by the Stuttering Foundation.

Workshop graduates at closing ceremony.

Front row: Diane Hill, Kate McShane, Carolyn Gregory, Hugo Gregory, June Finser, Joe Fincher, June Campbell.

The Stuttering Foundation’s Web site, http://www.stutteringhelp.org, continues to draw several hundred hits every day. Concerned parents, teens, and adults who stutter around the world are finding help as these comments indicate.

Wrote one man from Buffalo, New York, “The resources section is unbelievable. I feel as if someone cares about me and my problem to supply me with resources at such an affordable rate. Thank you so very much!”

Another wrote, “I just came across your Web site, actually by mistake. But I’m glad I did. I am 43 and have had a stuttering problem all my life. I look forward to reading your site.”

Instant information and ease of use draw comments such as “I was worried sick about my two-year-old and am so delighted to have found this help today when I need it.”

Our newest brochures, Turning On to Therapy and an updated September 2000 version of The Child Who Stutters at School: Notes to the Teacher, can now be found at www.stutteringhelp.org. The referral/resource lists as well as the list of libraries shelving SFA videotapes and books have also been updated.

New illustrations will now be found for several of the frequently visited brochures such as If You Think Your Child Is Stuttering.

Credit card donations may also be made to the Foundation at www.stutteringhelp.org.

The Italian version of Sometimes I Just Stutter can now be accessed at the Foundation’s Web site. This excellent translation was done by Luisella Cocco Raison of Torino, Italy.
Stuttering Foundation 2000 Journalism Award Winners

by Jean Gross

The Stuttering Foundation of America recently announced its 2000 Awards for Excellence in news reporting. Each winning entry successfully enhanced public understanding of stuttering, a complex speech disorder that affects millions of Americans.

"Journalists are giving greater attention to the causes and treatment of stuttering with in-depth stories that reflect a thorough understanding of this disorder," said Jane Fraser, president of the 53-year-old nonprofit foundation based in Memphis, Tennessee. "This year's numerous entries by print and electronic journalists were excellent in both attention to scientific detail and insights from people who stutter.

Nine distinguished journalists are honored this year for their contributions. Each of the winners will receive a cash award of $250.

Category: Large circulation newspapers

Kay Harvey, Saint Paul Pioneer Press (St. Paul, Minnesota). In "Freedom of Speech", Harvey took readers inside a speech clinic to observe how a therapist can help children and their parents work to overcome stuttering. She also examined how stuttering affects adults and the various treatments available to the public. The story was accompanied by helpful tips for readers and excellent visual elements to draw them in.

Category: Small circulation newspapers

Terri Staley, Morning Journal (Lisbon, Ohio). Readers of Staley's story found plenty of useful information for people who stutter and for those around them. This included tips on identifying stuttering's warning signs and how to react when speaking with someone who stutters.

Anne Patterson Braley, Chattanooga Times-Free Press (Chattanooga, Tennessee). Braley helped readers understand stuttering in young children, combining anecdotes and insights from a local speech therapist. The story also contained helpful information for parents on how to identify stuttering and how to talk to children who stutter.

Category: Television—Local

Maria Black, Channel 13, Memphis, Tennessee. This segment portrays a local postal service employee who stutters. He shares thoughtful tips for others who share the same handicap with viewers throughout the Mid-South. Viewers of all ages were given information on where to find help.

Category: Online Web Sites

John M. Williams, Business Week Online (New York, New York). In a series of thoughtful columns, Williams writes about how stuttering has impacted him and the lives of others, including country music star Mel Tillis. The stories provide links and Internet addresses for readers to obtain more information.

Category: Newspaper Columnists

Judy Foreman, Health Columnist, Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts). Using powerful anecdotes from people who stutter and insights from speech-language pathologists, Foreman delves into the complicated issues that surround stuttering. She also offers helpful tips for people when talking to someone who stutters.

Category: Radio

Lou Adler, Medical Journal, Eagle Media Productions Ltd. (Northford, Connecticut). In his two radio reports, Adler conducted informative interviews with Dr. Barry Guitar, an expert in the field of stuttering and a professor at the University of Vermont. There reports were helpful for both adults and parents of children who stutter and provided them with additional resources.

Category: Television—National

Alix Casler, M.D., The Health Network. Dr. Casler conducts an engaging interview with speech-language pathologist Lizanne Blake, M.S., that gives parents good ideas to help their young children who stutter.
2000 Schools Conference A Success

The Sheraton North Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina, was the setting for the SFA annual conference for school clinicians. Stuttering Therapy: Practical Ideas for the School Clinician. Co-sponsored by the Stuttering Foundation of America and the University of South Carolina, the conference was a resounding success.

Ninety-four clinicians attended, representing 10 states and a variety of employment settings including schools, university clinics, and private practice.

Participants heard presentations from Peter Ramig, Barry Guitar, Charles Healey, Bill Murphy, Sheryl Gottwald, Kristin Chamla, and Nina Reardon on topics such as practical strategies for therapy, functional methods for measuring progress, dealing with guilt and shame, working with teachers, counseling parents, and dealing effectively with emotions and attitudes.

It was reinforcing for many clinicians to have the opportunity to see techniques and ideas being demonstrated, as well as have the opportunity to ask questions of leading experts in the area of childhood stuttering. Additionally, the opportunity to follow up concepts in the small group discussion sessions was viewed as a critical component of the conference.

One unique aspect of this year’s conference was the opportunity for guided practice in the small group discussion periods. Group leaders and presenters paired to work with each group, demonstrating many of the common speech modification tools used in therapy with children. Group members then had the opportunity to practice their skills with these modification tools and received feedback from the leaders and presenters.

The guided practice opportunity was such a success it will be incorporated into all future 2-day conferences.

Evaluation comments indicated that the unique combination of presentations followed by discussion groups and guided practice make this conference one of the premier continuing education opportunities available to school-based speech pathologists.

Commented one participant from North Carolina, “This was the most caring, useful, well-presented conference I have attended in a long while. And this information will help and change my professional goals. I am sure the outcome for all of my clients will benefit immensely.” Another added, “Best conference I have ever attended in 14 years!”

Another evaluation said that the conference was, “not just geared to people who stutter. Most of what has been said holds for ALL therapy and disorders. It’s a shame that someone not interested in stuttering would miss this enriching experience!”

Next year’s two-day conference for professionals working in school settings will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Call for Nominations:
2001 Malcom Fraser Award

The Stuttering Foundation of America and the Special Interest Division for Fluency and Fluency Disorders (SID 4) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association announce a call for nominations for the 2001 Malcolm Fraser Award, an award bestowed on an individual in recognition of excellence in the field of stuttering.

The award, consisting of a plaque and $2,000 from the Stuttering Foundation of America, will be presented at the 2001 Annual Leadership Conference of the SID 4. Among other criteria for eligibility, nominees should have highly respected, distinguished careers in speech-language pathology (or closely related disciplines) with specific and multiple contributions that have made significant positive impact on children and/or adults who stutter.

Nominations may be in the areas of clinical services, research, support for persons who stutter, and/or professional training or development of clinicians.

To request nomination guidelines, please write to: Klaus Baiker, SID 4 Awards Committee Chair, 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852. Completed nomination packets must be received at the same address of ASHA by January 19, 2001.

For Combined Federal Campaign donors, please note that our code number for the 2000–2001 CFC campaign is CFC #2539.

We are proud that over 95 cents of every dollar goes directly into helping those who stutter.
Stuttering: The Preschool Child
Help for Parents and Families

This fall the Stuttering Foundation of America is releasing a new videotape for parents and families of preschool children who stutter. The major focus of the tape is to help parents and families understand their child’s stuttering and make changes in the environment to foster fluency.

The first section describes and illustrates what stuttering is like in preschool children. Parents recount their emotions and reactions when their children first began to stutter. Stuttering experts and the parents themselves recommend a number of immediate steps to help the child, including maintaining family routines, providing reasonable and consistent discipline, reducing time pressure in daily living, and providing the child with adequate transition time between activities.

The second part describes the factors that put the child at risk for stuttering, factors both within the child’s constitutional makeup and within the child’s environment. The ways these factors may combine and interact are illustrated in concrete examples.

Knowing how these risk factors interact can guide the clinician in evaluating a preschool child who stutters. Experienced clinicians on the video describe the components of a complete evaluation and why it is so crucial.

The final section deals with treatment for the preschool child. Most important are changes the family can make. These include reducing speech rate and increasing the frequency of pauses when talking to the child, spending more one-on-one time with the child, reducing the frequency of questions, and listening attentively to what the child is saying.

If these changes do not substantially reduce the child’s stuttering, the clinician may then work with the child more directly, in ways illustrated by the video. The child may be taught simple speech skills or, if a more direct approach is indicated, he may learn to feel the difference between “bumpy” and “smooth” speech. In addition, emphasis may be placed on openness and acceptance of the stuttering as the child learns to stutter more easily.

The video is designed for a wide range of uses, from families whose child is just beginning to stutter mildly to speech pathologists who are working directly with the child and would like to educate families about the nature of stuttering and its treatment.

Featured in this outstanding production are Barry Guitar, Ph.D., of the University of Vermont, Diane Hill, M.A., of Northwestern University, Peter Rambtig, Ph.D., of the University of Colorado-Boulder, and Patricia Zebrowski, Ph.D., of the University of Iowa. Editing was completed by Carroll Guitar, M.L.S., and Jane Fraser.

School-Age Population Targeted
In New Edition

Dr. Carl Dell’s excellent book, Treating The School-Age Child Who Stutters: A Guide for Clinicians, has recently been published in its second edition. Since it first appeared in 1979, it has reached hundreds of thousands of readers in the United States but also abroad where it has been translated into many foreign languages including German and French.

The new edition includes many sample dialogues between clinician and child, illustrating how to introduce therapy concepts to children. These dialogues guide clinicians in talking directly with children about their stuttering or a stuttering moment in particular, sometimes a daunting task. They have been reorganized for easier reading.

The book’s primary focus is on stuttering modification techniques that can be used with children. They include catching a moment of tension and holding onto it, discussing fear, and

Self Therapy Now
In Ninth Edition

Self Therapy for the Stutterer, written By Malcolm Fraser, is recently revised and printed in its ninth edition. It first appeared in 1978 and since that time has reached several million individuals who stutter in many far flung parts of the world.

It has been updated to include new research information as well as new illustrations. One important addition is a hierarchy, showing the reasons how they can practice their new strategies in speaking situations that gradually increase in difficulty. Another addition is that of a chart that allows readers to keep careful track of the progress they are making.

Written by the founder of the Stuttering Foundation, whose own stuttering himself, the book offers ideas for coping with stuttering and making speech changes which are useful to many adults who stutter. Many readers use the book when they are unable or unwilling to go to traditional speech therapy, andclinicians use the book with their clients to supplement what is being learned in therapy.

It has been translated into German, French, Spanish, Lithuanian, Czech, Danish, Slovak, Russian, Finnish, and even Zulu. Translations have been done by speech-language pathologists and physicians who stutter themselves. Because they themselves were helped by the book, they wanted others in their own country to be able to profit from it as well. None received any payment for their translation work, donating it to help others.

Editor’s note: For more information about this book, call 1-800-992-9392.

using pull-outs and cancellations. This focus on using stuttering modification with school-age children makes it one of a very small number of published materials which emphasizes this approach with the school-age population.

Editor’s note: For more information about this book, call 1-800-992-9392.
Alprazolam
Continued from page 1

(10 mg at bedtime) was prompt and dramatic. We could detect only traces of his former impeding. Family, friends, and colleagues have all spontaneously noted and remarked on his greatly increased fluency. Dr. A. reports that he now speaks out in many situations where previously he said little out of fear of stuttering. His score on the Stuttering Rating Scale decreased from 6 to 2 (mild stutter). In his 20th week of treatment, Dr. A. continued to improve. With this great reduction in stuttering, his anticipatory anxiety has greatly reduced, making it possible to gradually discontinue his alprazolam use. However, the citalopram (reducing the core symptoms of stuttering) remains necessary (20 mg at bedtime).

We have treated three additional men with severe stuttering in this manner. Two reported experiencing fewer side effects with clomipramine (100 mg at bedtime) and will continue with this agent. The third patient reported fewer side effects with citalopram (20 mg at bedtime) and will continue with this drug. All three showed marked improvement in their speech on the Stuttering Rating Scale (from 6-6.5 before treatment to 1.5-2 with treatment). All three continue to take alprazolam as well (1 mg twice daily).

John Paul Brady, M.D.
Merton, Pennsylvania

Zahr Ati, M.D.
Blintur, New York

References:

Alprazolam was first introduced in 1981 and is marketed by Roche Laboratories, Nutley, New Jersey. It is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of anxiety disorders (including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social phobia). Alprazolam is a member of the benzodiazepine family of drugs, which are known for their sedative, hypnotic, and anxiolytic properties. It is typically prescribed as an adjunct to psychotherapy for patients with anxiety disorders. However, alprazolam has also been found to be effective in the treatment of stuttering, as reported in the document.

The SFA conference for speech-language pathologists working with the school-age child who stutters will be held June 6th and 7th, 2001, in Salt Lake City, Utah. For more information and an application form, contact SFA at 1-800-992-9392.

The annual Stuttering Therapy: Workshop for Specialists co-sponsored by the Stuttering Foundation and Northwestern University will be held at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, in July 2001. For more information, contact the Stuttering Foundation at 1-800-992-9392, or write Dr. Hugh Gregory, c/o SFA, 3100 Walnut Grove Road, Suite 603, Memphis, TN 38111-0749. This unique workshop brings together speech-language pathologists from all over the world.

The Stuttering Foundation of America Southeastern Workshop, “Diagnosis and Treatment of Children Who Stutter: Practical Strategies,” directed by Dr. Susan Dietrich and Dr. Cheryl Gottwald will be held at University of North Carolina-Greensboro, June, 2001. Call the SFA at 800-992-9392.

The Stuttering Foundation of America Midwest Workshop, “Diagnosis and Treatment of Children Who Stutter: Practical Strategies,” directed by Dr. Lisa Scott Treisman and Kristin Cleven, M.A., will be held at Wichita State University, July, 2001. Call SFA for information.


The NSA Convention will be held in Boston in June, 2001. For more information, call the NSA office at 1-800-364-1677.

For those interested in joining Toastmasters International as a way to improve fluency, communication or public speaking skills, their address is: Toastmasters International, Inc., Attention: Membership Department, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690, Telephone: (714) 588-3255; Fax: (714) 859-1207.

For those wanting to obtain a copy of Self-Therapy for the Stutterer in Japanese, write to Dr. Shokichi Nakajima, 2-21-1 Ogawa Machida-shi, Tokyo 194, Japan, telephone/fax 0427 (96) 5092.

For those looking to obtain a copy of Self-Therapy for the Stutterer in French, write to the Association des Bégues de Canada, 7801 Rue Ste. Claire, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. H1L 1V8. Please enclose $15.00 Canadian to cover printing, postage, and handling costs.

For those wanting to obtain a copy of Stuttering and Your Child: Questions and Answers in Hindi, write to: Dr. Saijay Adhakia, Adhakia Speech and Hearing Clinic, 77, Sant Nagar, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065, India, or call at 011-91-628-8836, e-mail: adhakias@hotmail.com Those interested in joining a fluency and public speaking skills group should also contact Dr. Adhakia at the above address.

Dr. Anne Foundas is looking for adults who stutter in the greater New Orleans area interested in participating in a project to study neuroanatomical models of stuttering. If you are interested in participating or have any questions or comments, contact Dr. Anne Foundas at the following address: Department of Neurology, Tulane University School of Medicine, 1430 Tulane Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70112-2609. Phone: 504-992-5585 (Voice Mail and evenings, ask for Cassie Browning), 504-588-5734 (Days, ask for Laura Cardin).

We are planning an annual meeting in 2002. We will be contacting everyone about this soon. Please stay tuned for updates.

References:

The original of the above article was published in the Journal of Clinical Psychology and Neurology. Vol. 20(No. 2, April 2000).

Books on Stuttering or Related Topics Available from Bookstores:

- Stuttering: An Integrated Approach to Its Nature and Treatment by Barry Gutir, Ph.D., Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, MD.
- Stuttering Intervention: A Collaborative Journey to Fluency from the Perspective of Allen Shapiro, published by Pro-Ea, Austin, Texas.
- The Bob Love Story: If It's Gonna Be, It's Up to Me, by Bob Love, available through bookstores or call NTI Contemporary Publishing, 1-800-322-9971.
- Paroles de Poetres by Pierre Marie Simon, L’Orthez, France.
- Nature and Treatment of Stuttering: New Directions by Richard F. Curlee, Ph.D. and Gerald M. Siegel, Ph.D., published by Alyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.
- Special Children, Challenged Parents, by Robert A. Neufeld, Ph.D., by Carol Publishing Group, Secaucus, New Jersey, 1-800-447-2665.
- Elements of Stuttering by Courneya Sramka, Ph.D. Available from the Iron Horse Information Center, Boulderdale Publishing Company, P.O. Box 333, Oshkosh, WI 54907. Please send $19.95 plus $3.00 handling charge.
- Stuttering: A Search for a Cause and a Cure by Oliver Bloodworth. It is published by Alyn & Bacon, Needham, MA.
- Unforgettable Facts I Have Known by Bill Lynde. Published by Book Partners in Wilusville, OR, 503-682-9821 or 800-895-7333.
- Speak Mandarin Not Dialect by SLP Elizabeth Hayes. Available through Tidewater Press Ltd., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada 306-244-1722 or www.thedishedown skl.ca.

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