

Peer Review

Review of: "Understanding Stuttering: A Taxonomic Review of Models, Paradigms, and Theories"

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Your aims, research questions, and objectives sound good. However, you need to be clear about what you are actually addressing in this paper. It does not address all of the objectives stated, nor the research questions listed. Do you have a bigger research project that examines these? If so, it is useful to provide this context, but you need to identify what this paper focuses on.

In terms of Method, note that PRISMA is a guideline for *reporting* of systematic reviews with meta-analysis (although it has been used to guide reporting for other types of review such as narrative). It is not designed to be a methodological guideline for how to conduct a narrative review. This is a very common mistake – see this paper for a discussion of this:

Sarkis-Onofre, R., Catalá-López, F., Aromataris, E., & Lockwood, C. (2021). How to properly use the PRISMA Statement. *Systematic Reviews*, 10, 1–3.

There are many places to find guidance for the actual conduct of a review like this, and these should be your sources for your methodology – for example, see

Sukhera, J. (2022). Narrative reviews: flexible, rigorous, and practical. *Journal of graduate medical education*, 14(4), 414–417.

Siddaway, A. P., Wood, A. M., & Hedges, L. V. (2019). How to do a systematic review: a best practice guide for conducting and reporting narrative reviews, meta-analyses, and meta-syntheses. *Annual review of psychology*, 70(1), 747–770.

Durai, S. (2021). Designing the literature review: Historical, narrative, theoretical, integrative, and scoping reviews. *Indian Journal of Continuing Nursing Education*, 22(1), 75–79.

This is a large issue – because it is very unclear what you were doing in this review other than tabulating the theories and evaluating the evidence for them on the basis of intervention research. Your statistics are reported without clear information about what they are analyses of. I'd also strongly suggest that you include more than the three databases named for this search.

What you have done is a huge amount of work, and your Table 1 is very interesting and useful as a summary of theories, but it doesn't address your aims, research questions, or objectives. For example, your results do not describe how these relate to treatment methods except in some cases, and the historical context, timeline of evolution, research trends, societal stigma, and cultural factors – all stated as part of the objectives for this research. The focus is on the Level of Evidence for interventions that have used each theory.

This means that this isn't really providing anything new by simply identifying the levels of evidence for each theory. It is not surprising that behavioural theory has the most evidence, because Lidcombe has the most evidence. There are several systematic reviews that have identified that Lidcombe has the most evidence, based on several RCTs – see, for example,

Laiho, A., Elovaara, H., Kaisamatti, K., Luhtalampi, K., Talaskivi, L., Pohja, S., ... & Vuorio, E. (2022). Stuttering interventions for children, adolescents, and adults: a systematic review as a part of clinical guidelines. *Journal of communication disorders*, 99, 106242.

Your discussion that theories with low levels of evidence need more research is not incorrect, but you could take this much further if you were able to consider the areas noted in your aims, research questions, and objectives – for example, historical and cultural considerations. There is a lot that could be discussed here about the bias of evidence towards behavioural interventions (which are arguably easier to evaluate through an RCT than some other theories), as well as sociocultural considerations – the RCT as a Western scientific gold standard, it is not universal, nor does it define the way that all people and cultures see the world, truth, or 'evidence'. It also requires a certain amount of privilege in terms of access to research funding to achieve.

At the moment, this paper contributes a good summary of the theories that underpin stuttering, but the evaluation of these is very limited in terms of what is being presented. I would suggest that you need to consider revising it to address a clear methodology for the type of review that you hope to achieve, addressing a clear research question. Then use PRISMA to guide you as to what needs to be included when you report your study. All the best!

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.