

SCA-method for aphasic patients

Implementation of principles and tools for improving staff's communication with aphasic patients



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Principles of SCA-method

Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia

(Kagan 1998)



Others can learn to use techniques to include patients with aphasia in information exchange and decision

1. **Support** the PwA to participate in communication by using techniques and tools:
 - **IN** help PwA comprehend
 - **OUT** help PwA with alternative ways of expression
 - **CONFIRM** check that you have understood each other correctly
2. **Acknowledge** that the PwA is a competent adult

Evidence for communication partner training

Systematic review by Simmons-Mackie et al 2010; updated in 2016:

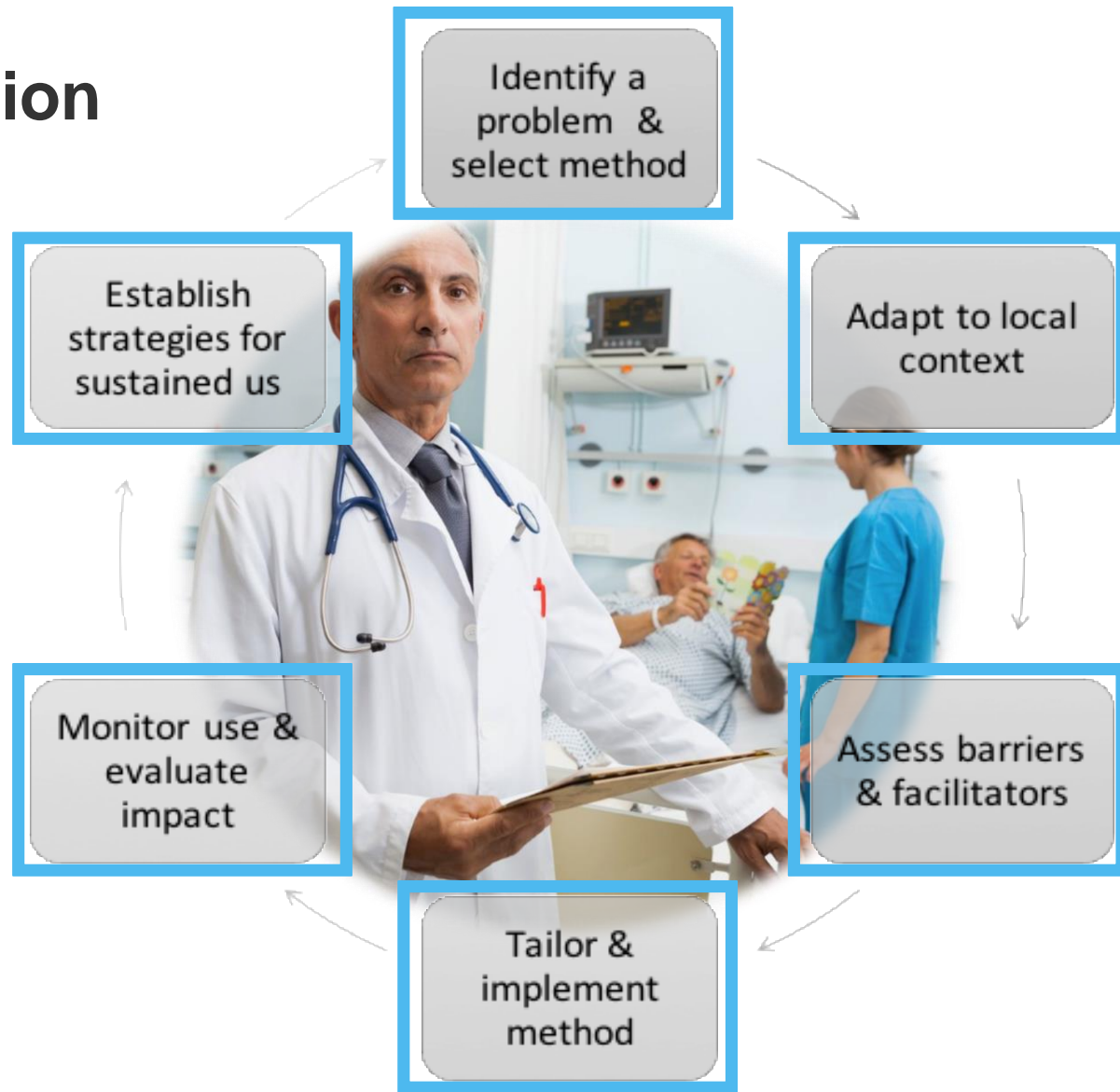
Outcome focus	Person with aphasia (PwA)	Communication partner
Communication activity and participation	<i>Probably effective</i> in improving PwA's activity/participation, with trained partners	<i>Effective</i> in improving partner's communicative behaviour

N of studies: 56 studies across two systematic reviews have reported positive outcomes from communication partner training in aphasia.

For example, RCT-study by Legg et al. (2006): 6th year medical students obtain more correct information from PwA, if trained in the SCA-method.

Implementation science

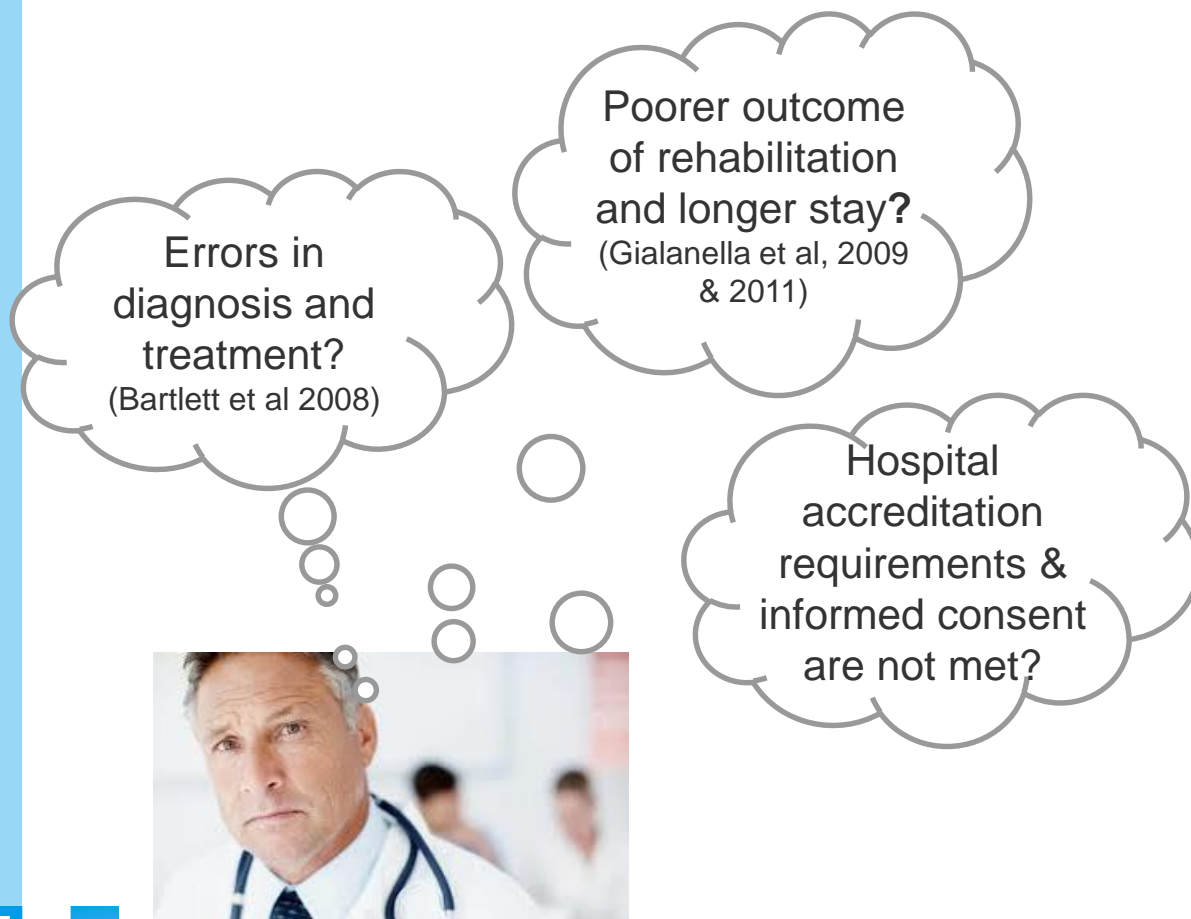
How implement the SCA-method for busy stroke unit staff?



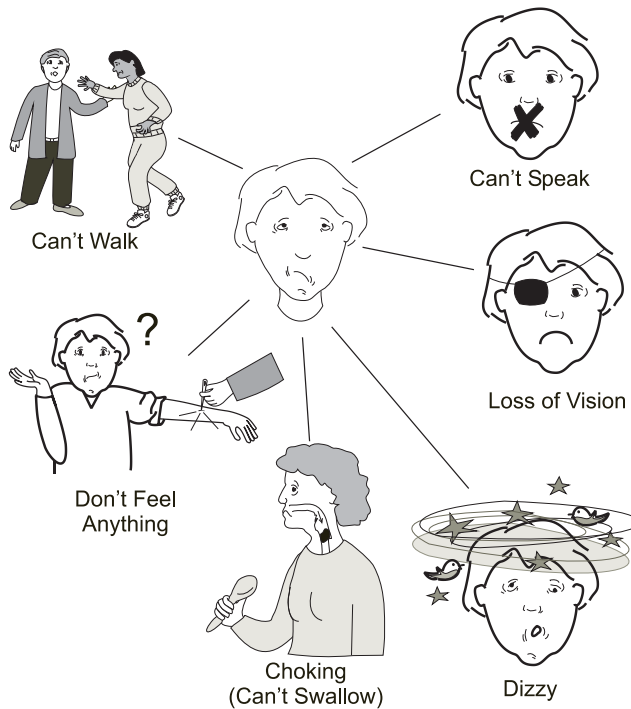
Based on Graham et al 2006; Damschroder et al 2009; Michie et al 2009.

Implementation step:

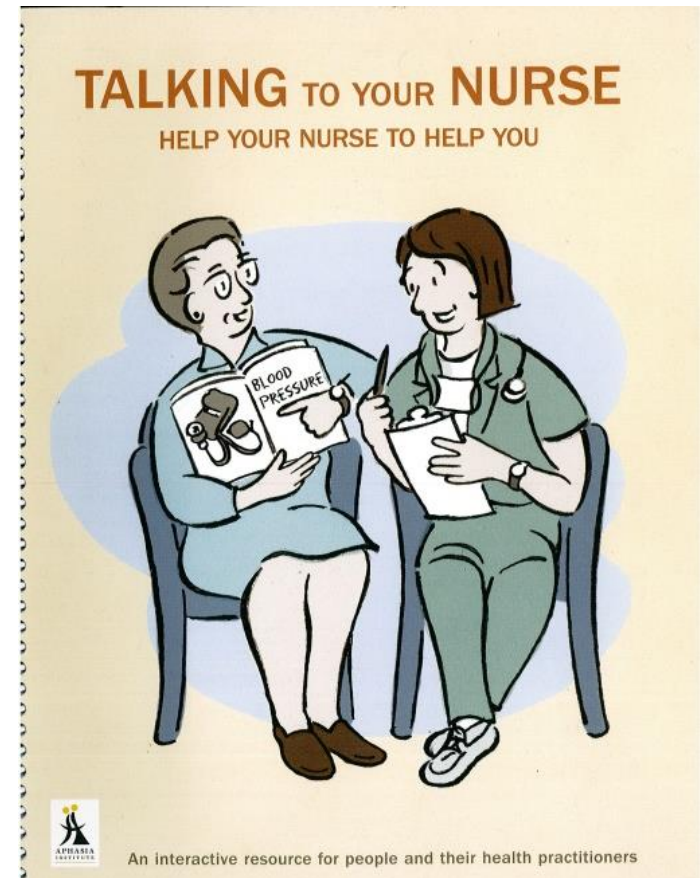
Identifying/ reframing the problem of communication with patients with aphasia



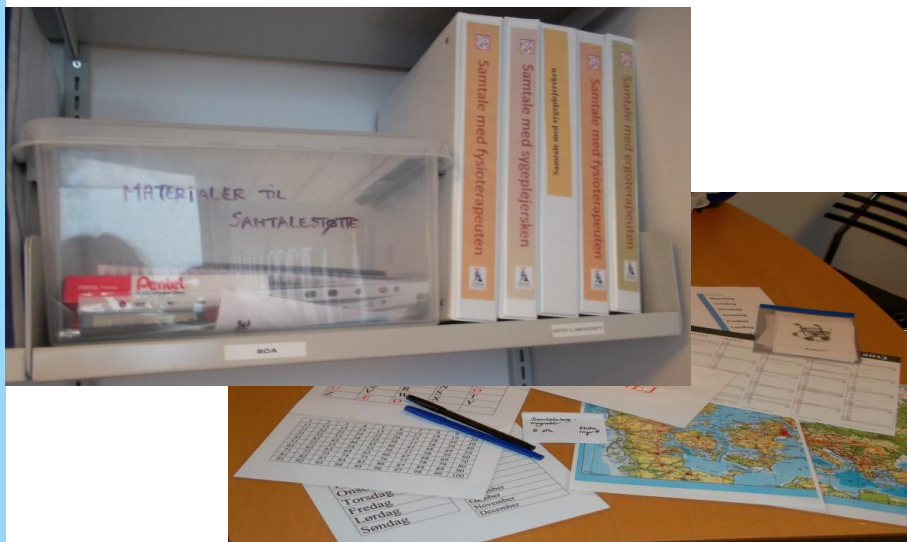
Implementation step: Adaptation/translation of Picture Ressources



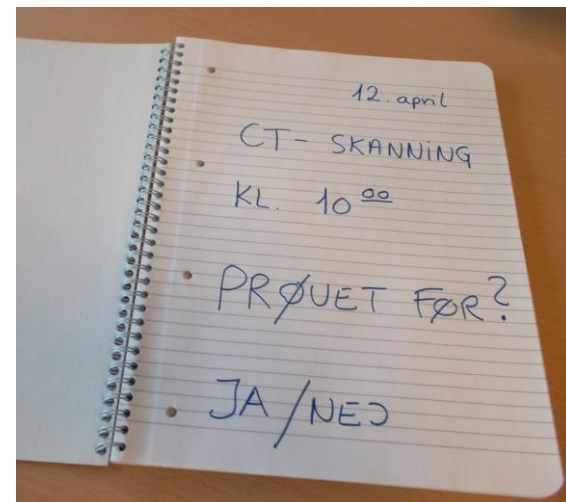
Similar ressource books also for PT, OT, medical doctor, case worker etc. (Kagan and Shumway, 2003)



Implementation step: Making tools easily accessible to staff



Communication toolkit in nursing stations



A 'dialogue notebook' on PWA's bedside table

Pocket size flashcards, e.g. of commonly used physical aids



Implementation step: Tailor & implement SCA-method

Tailored one day course

- Principles and practice use of techniques & tools
- Try out with volunteer patients

Implementation

- Courses given to >300 staff members since 2011
- New staff members get trained

Organizational level integration

- Procedural guideline specifying staff responsibilities
- Plan for use of SCA-method at patient conference meetings



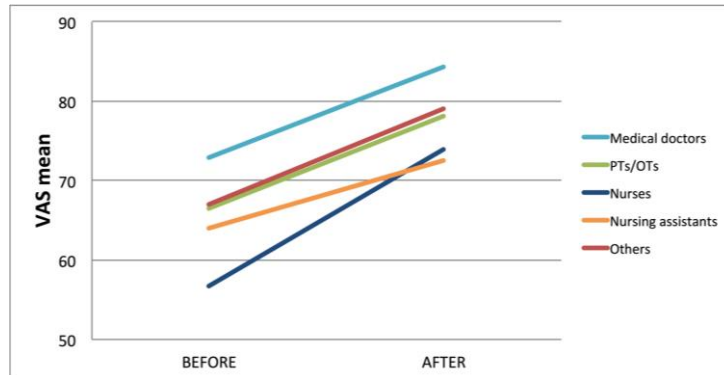
Strategies for sustained use & development of SCA-method

- Interdisciplinary superusers meet regularly with SCA-speech therapist
- Communication team with participating chiefs of staff

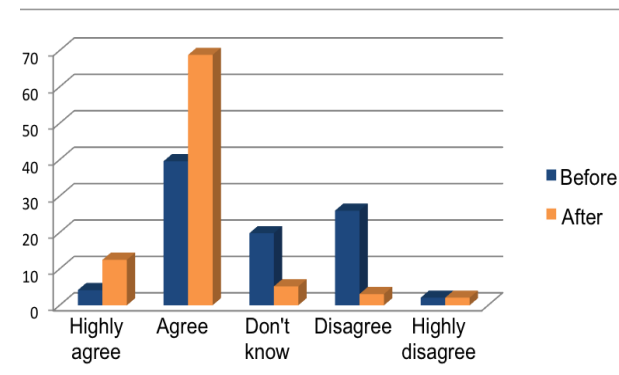
Implementation step: Monitor use & evaluate impact

Staff questionnaire, before and 3-6 months after SCA-course

Self-assessed knowledge of aphasia



If my communication with PwA breaks down, I know what to do



Some challenges

- Measuring impact on patients with aphasia
- Sustaining use and staff motivation



If you want to know more ...

Links with videos or information about the SCA-method:

- An introduction to Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) Self-directed learning module: <http://www.aphasia.ca/home-page/health-care-professionals/knowledge-exchange/self-directed-sca-module/> (19 brief videoclips and powerpoint presentation)
- Supporting communication for access and participation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCe8r_OZDj4 (UK group of patients with aphasia and health care professionals in different situations)
- Aphasia - what a difference some help makes - Training video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWVoqM9jmEM> (Nice illustration of how much information can be obtained with/without facilitating techniques and tools used by the communication partner).

The implementation study at Rigshospitalet-Glostrup:

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- Simmons-Mackie, N., Raymer, A., Armstrong, E., Holland, A., & Cherney, L. R. (2010). Communication partner training in aphasia: a systematic review. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil*, 91(12), 1814-1837.
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