Return to work for stroke survivors with aphasia: Preliminary findings of a scoping review
Penni Burfein1,2, Dr Tracy Roxbury2, Nadia de Silva3, Prof David Copland2

1. Speech Pathology Department, The Royal Brisbane & Women’s Hospital 2. School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, The University of Queensland

**Background**
- ~25% of Australian stroke survivors are of working age (<65 years), and there is emerging evidence that younger stroke onset is increasing worldwide.3,4
- Return to work is a key rehabilitation goal in this cohort, including people with aphasia (an impairment of language production and/or comprehension5) to minimize negative social participation and economic consequences during peak employment years.6,7
- Successful transition back to work after one year post stroke is highly variable (35-75%)8,9
- Return to work for stroke survivors with aphasia: Preliminary findings of a scoping review

**Methods**
- Key terms were systematically applied in multiple databases from commencement until 08.08.2020 with reference to the PRISMA-ScR guidelines10.
- Search terms related to ‘aphasia’ OR ‘stroke’ AND ‘speech’, ‘language’ or ‘communication assessment’ OR ‘rehabilitation’ AND ‘RTW’ OR ‘social participation’ were searched by medical subjective headings (MeSH), title and abstract.
- Covidence Software was utilized independently by PB & ND to conduct the review according to inclusion and exclusion criteria with discrepancies resolved by TR.

**English articles were selected if they included the concepts:** People with post stroke aphasia OR

**Emerging themes**
- People with aphasia have inferior re-employment outcomes with variability evident between studies (2-64%)11,12
- Consistent with stroke literature,13 methodological differences between papers potentially influence the inconsistency in work re-entry rates reported
- No research describing work stability rates identified
- Formal language assessments were rarely conducted to diagnose the presence of aphasia
- Nil specific language assessments identified to evaluate work-related communication function or potential work readiness
- Lack of literature describing the impact of cognitive deficits on return to work
- Minimal studies to inform the content, intensity, timing or effectiveness of vocationally related language interventions
- Nil research investigating technology interventions with a VR communication therapy focus

**Conclusions and future directions**
- There is limited evidence available to inform clinical practice targeting vocational-language assessment, and invention for people with aphasia to maximize RTW outcomes.
- Upon completion, this scoping review will provide a comprehensive evaluation of vocational outcomes in people with aphasia. Qualitative thematic analysis of consumer perceptions of the return to work experience will detail insights not previously documented.
- The conclusions will continue to inform a broader research project including a MNHHS multi-site longitudinal mixed-methods study to describe vocational outcomes, document language ability and work experiences of people with aphasia.

The conclusions will continue to inform a broader research project including a MNHHS multi-site longitudinal mixed-methods study to describe vocational outcomes, document language ability and work experiences of people with aphasia.