The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions that middle school children who stutter (CWS) and fluent children have toward bullying and stuttering. We were interested in determining (1) the perceptions about bullying and stuttering for these two groups, (2) strategies that CWS suggested would reduce bullying, (3) how CWS define bullying as it applies to stuttering, and (4) what relationship exists between bullying and stuttering as it pertains to age, gender, perceptions about stuttering, and non-physical (i.e., indirect) forms of bullying. Results indicated that the act of teasing was considered bullying and was relatively the same in CWS – 93.3% (N=28) and fluent children 93.8% (N=152) agreed. Data indicated that 86.7% (N=26) CWS believed that being left out of activities was considered bullying compared to 78.8% (N=128) fluent children. A greater percentage of CWS – 35.5% (N=11) believed CWS should walk away if excluded from activities because they stuttered compared to fluent children.
1. RESEARCH PLAN

Problem/Hypothesis Statement: Do middle school children who stutter and normally fluent children differ in their views about bullying and stuttering?

Literature Review

Bullying has been defined as when a student is “...exposed, repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more students” (Olweus, 1997, p. 496). Many authors have indicated that children who stutter (CWS) may be bullied because they stutter (Blood & Blood, 2004; Davis, Howell, & Cooke, 2002; Langevin, Bortnick, Hammer, & Wiebe, 1998; Link & Tellis, 2006; Mooney & Smith, 1995). Researchers have indicated that CWS are more likely to be bullied and to hold a lower social position than their peers who do not stutter.

According to Blood and Blood (2004), a clear picture of the characteristics contributing to the stereotypes of victims of bullying is beginning to emerge. Victims of bullying are reported to be more cautious, anxious, quiet, lonely, abandoned, insecure, unassertive, unhappy, and hypersensitive than children who are not victims of bullying behavior (Nabuzoka, 2003; Olweus, 1997). Interestingly, these are the same negative labels often used to describe persons who stutter (Lass, Russello, Pannbacker, Schmitt, & Everly-Myers, 1989). Many authors have also suggested that CWS may be bullied because they are disfluent (Blood & Blood, 2004; Davis, Howell, & Cooke, 2002; Langevin, Bortnick, Hammer, & Wiebe, 1998; Mooney & Smith, 1995).

Need For Research

The purpose of this study was to compare data from two previous IRB approved studies with CWS. Data from the Link and Tellis (2006) study with fluent children were compared with data from the Tellis, Barone, and Bomboy (2011) study with CWS. In both studies, a scale was administered to assess the perceptions that fluent children and CWS have toward bullying and
stuttering. The scale that was administered to CWS was called the Bullying Inventory for Children Who Stutter (Tellis, et al., 2011) and the scale that was administered to fluent children was called the Peer Relationship Inventory of Children who Stutter (Link & Tellis, 2006). Since there has been limited research conducted on the perceptions about bullying and stuttering, this study will provide valuable information about the relationship between bullying and stuttering for these two groups of children.

Research Design and Sample

The design of this study entailed several different stages. In the original Link and Tellis (2006) and the Tellis et al. (2011) studies, several steps were initiated. For both studies, during stage 1, a literature review was conducted to gain an understanding of the issues surrounding bullying and CWS. During stage 2, the Peer Relationship Inventory of Children who Stutter (Link & Tellis, 2006) and the Bullying Inventory for Children who Stutter (Tellis, et al., 2011) were both revised and converted to a Likert-type 5-point scale. During stage 3, the questions in the scales were randomized and the Peer Relationship Inventory of Children who Stutter (Link & Tellis, 2006) was administered to fluent children and the Bullying Inventory for Children who Stutter (Tellis, et al., 2011) was administered to CWS. In both publications after the surveys were completed, during stage 4, face, content, and construct validity was determined.

Method of Data Analysis

A factor analysis procedure was applied to the responses of the scale items, and items that had loading values of .35 and above on at least one factor were retained. During stage 5, test-retest reliability was determined with Spearman’s rank order using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.1 software.

For the present study, I compared the data from both the previous studies and entered data into a new SPSS 13.1 spreadsheet that included all information from these two data sets
(i.e., Link & Tellis, 2006; Tellis, et al., 2011) and conducted a post hoc analysis of the data. Correlation analyses as well as ANOVAs were run on the data sets. Cross-tabulation information was also conducted. Preliminary results showed that 86.7% (N=26) of CWS agreed that being left out of activities was considered bullying, whereas 78.8% (N=128) of fluent children agreed. Fifty percent (N=15) of CWS agreed that they should fight back if teased because of stuttering, while 37.2% (N=61) of normally fluent children agreed. Data indicated that 86.7% (N=26) of CWS agreed that they should avoid students who physically hurt them and 64.5% (N=20) said they should ignore the students. Data indicated that 77.4% (N=127) of fluent children agreed that CWS should avoid students who physically hurt them and 60.7% (N=99) said they should ignore the students.

**Limitations**

The only limitation of the study was the low number of CWS.

**Contribution to the Field**

It is anticipated that the data from this study will contribute to existing research about stuttering.

2. **RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION**

**Potential this project has for increasing the knowledge in speech-language pathology**

The study is intended to provide speech-language pathologists with a tool for assessing the attitudes that middle school CWS and fluent children have toward bullying and stuttering. Data from this study can be used to provide necessary information for developing intervention programs for CWS.
Plans for disseminating findings

The findings of this study will be presented at the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders in Tours, France in summer 2012. If accepted for presentation, the study will automatically qualify for peer-reviewed scientific journal publication that is part of the Proceeds of the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders.

3. CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Analyzing data for this study contributed to my growth as a student in many aspects. It has taught me the crucial aspects of being an effective researcher in the aspects of data analysis. Also, my confidence in professional writing and my ability to execute informational presentations has significantly improved. Along with this study, I will be presenting another study at the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders. I am now able to use the knowledge and theories I have learned in my educational career and apply them to my research. All that I have experienced cannot be learned solely in a classroom. I will only continue to grow as a researcher in my next three years at Misericordia University. I believe that all the hours spent doing research will give me everlasting knowledge, help my career, and benefit my future clients.

4. SUPPORT

A support letter from my faculty advisor is attached.

5. Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Tomaselli</td>
<td>Submit IFA abstract</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February – March 2012</td>
<td>Tomaselli</td>
<td>Analysis of data</td>
<td>Finish by end of March 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Tomaselli</td>
<td>Design presentation</td>
<td>Will complete by May 18, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>Tomaselli</td>
<td>Present at the 7th World</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2012</td>
<td>Tomaselli</td>
<td>Submit progress report</td>
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</table>
6. BUDGET

See attached budget sheet.

7. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

These expenses are related to my attendance at the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders in Tours, France.

• Roundtrip airfare is needed to and from the conference ($1,200.00).

• Misericordia University’s insurance plan totals to $19.60 ($9.80 (per week) x 2 weeks).

• Shared hotel accommodations for five nights with another student is $299.50 per person.

• The student conference registration fee is $467.84.

• Per diem costs for food totals to $308.00 ($44.00 (per day) x 7 days).

• Roundtrip train fares between the airport in Paris and Tours costs $100.00.

• Travel to and from the train station in Tours to the hotel costs $50.00.

• Travel to and from the airport between Dallas, PA and JFK totals to $167.20 (152 mi x 2 trips x $0.55 per mile).

• Although the total cost of the trip will equal $2,588.54, I am requesting that the student grants committee award me $1,355.50 to cover my round trip airfare ($1,200.00), train fares ($100.00), and a hotel in Paris during travel ($55.50).
## Misericordia University
### Student Research Grants Program
#### Budget Form

**Your Name:** Tomaselli, A.
**Dept.:** SLP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>ITEM CALCULATION</th>
<th>GRANT AMOUNT</th>
<th>OTHER SOURCE (if any)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supplies and Materials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel to present the research</td>
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<td>Airfare to present research in Tours, France (roundtrip)</td>
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<td>Mileage to and from Dallas, PA to JFK airport, NY (152 miles one way - 304 miles x .55)</td>
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<td>Hotel in Tours, France 7-1 to 7-5 ($61 per person) x 4 nights)</td>
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<td>Hotel in France 7-5 ($55.50 per person) x 1 night)</td>
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<td><strong>Travel to conduct research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration for the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food per diem ($44 per day - $7 breakfast, $12 lunch, &amp; $25 dinner) x 7 days</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>1,233.04</td>
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References


RE: Student Research Grant

02/26/2012

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Amanda Tomaselli who is applying for a Student Research Grant. Amanda has conducted research for me for the past year and I believe that I am in a unique position to provide a letter of support for her application.

A hallmark of Amanda’s work is that she is an exceptional student who performs in the top 5% in all her assignments and academic performance. Amanda is always respectful and courteous. She has a keen intellect and it is apparent from her insights that she goes beyond the textbook to enlighten her peers and to seek clarification of important concepts. Amanda approached me a year ago about research. At that time I was conducting a study with response cost and reinforcing fluency only and ignoring stuttering to determine the effects on stuttering. Amanda spent countless hours meticulously analyzing data and helped me present the findings at our national American Speech-Language Hearing Association Convention in San Diego in November 2011. In fact, she conducted research for two more of my studies and helped me present the results of all three studies at the conference. Several of my colleagues were very impressed with her presentation and could not believe that Amanda was a sophomore. Her command of the topic was exceptional. In 2011, she presented with me at our Pennsylvania Speech-Language Hearing Association Convention when she was a freshmen. These are remarkable achievements.

Amanda has submitted two papers with me for the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders in Tours, France. The conference will be held in July 2012. Amanda has conducted extensive research for these studies and once again has spent numerous hours analyzing results of two IRB approved previous studies that I have conducted. She is seeking funding to present information of a study that compares whether there are differences in middle school students’ (fluent and children who stutter) views about stuttering and bullying. These data have never been analyzed before and Amanda will be presenting this original research for the first time. Bullying is a significant issue world-wide. Research indicates that bullying peaks in middle school and her data indicate similarities for children who stutter. She will be presenting information about strategies that fluent children and children who stutter indicate may reduce bullying. If Amanda’s paper is accepted, it will automatically be considered for peer-reviewed publication in the Proceedings of the 7th World Congress on Fluency Disorders publication.

I believe that this is an incredible opportunity for Amanda to present on the world stage at this prestigious conference that is attended by premier researchers in our field. Given the quality of her work, I fully support Amanda’s request for funding and hope the committee approves her request.

Sincerely,

Glen M. Tellis, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Chair
June 16, 2011

Glen Tellis, Ph.D.
Speech-Language Pathology Department
Misericordia University
Dallas, PA 18612

Dear Glen:

The IRB reviewed your annual update for your study “Bullying Inventory for Children who Sutter”. Your request for a continuation until August 1, 2012 has been approved by the IRB.

Attached is the consent form originally submitted with an updated period of eligibility. This is the only consent form to be used and any modifications must be approved by the IRB. You will be reminded one month prior from the expiration date of your research protocol to complete an End-of-Project Report.

Please remember that you have the responsibility to notify the IRB of any changes in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Diane Madras, Ph.D.
Chairperson, IRB
November 12, 2008

Glen Tellis, Ph.D.
Speech-Language Pathology Department
Misericordia University
Dallas, PA 18612

Dear Glen:

Thank you for submitting the items requested by the IRB for your application “Bullying Inventory for Children who Stutter” #18-08-T3. Your study is now approved by the IRB.

As part of the approval, the IRB has received and accepted the consent form as submitted. The attached consent form with a valid period of eligibility is the only consent form to be used. Any modifications must be approved by the IRB. The date stamp indicates the eligible period.

Your study is scheduled for annual review one year from November 12, 2008. You will be reminded one month prior to this date of your need to complete an Annual Update or End of Project Report. You also have the responsibility to notify the IRB of any changes in the conduct of this study or injury to study subjects and to retain all approved application documents and signed consent forms for a minimum of three years following completion of the study (this includes student research). Please refer to the IRB Policies and Procedures document for specific details on what is expected.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Diane Madras, Ph.D.
Chairperson, IRB