3. **Shrubsole, K., Rogers, K. & Power, E. (2021) Sustaining acute speech-language therapists implementation of recommended aphasia practices: A mixed methods follow up evaluation of a cluster RCT** *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, 1-20* *https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1460-6984.12684*

Background; While implementation studies in aphasia management have shown promising improvements to clinical practice, it is currently unknown if aphasia implementation outcomes are sustained and what factors may influence clinical sustainability.

Aims; To evaluate the sustainment (i.e., sustained improvement of aphasia management practices and domains influencing clinicians' practice) and sustainability (i.e., factors influencing sustainability) outcomes of the Acute Aphasia IMplementation Study (AAIMS).

Methods & Procedures; A convergent interactive mixed-methods sustainability evaluation was conducted on two previously delivered implementation interventions (AAIMS). The AAIMS interventions were targeted at improving either written aphasia-friendly information provision (Intervention A) or collaborative goal-setting (Intervention B). Outcomes were collected 2 and 3 years post-implementation, addressing the research questions of sustainment (e.g., medical record audits and behavioural constructs questionnaires) and sustainability (e.g., post-study focus groups and organizational readiness surveys). Quantitative sustainability data were compared with post-implementation data, allowing for sustainment to be determined. Clinicians' perspectives on sustainability outcomes and challenges were analysed using framework analysis and integrated with the quantitative findings.

Outcomes & Results; A total of 35 speech–language therapists (SLTs) from four hospitals participated. The medical records of 79 patients were audited in the sustainability period compared with the 107 medical records audited during AAIMS. Overall, there was variable sustainment of the target behaviours; implementation for Intervention A was not sustained at either sustainability time point (2018 = 47.8% decrease; 2019 = 22.78% decrease), but implementation for Intervention B was sustained at both time points (2018 = 7.78% increase; 2019 = 18.1% increase). There was a pattern of sustained change in the behaviour change domains targeted by the implementation interventions, where scores of the targeted domains increased over time (0.13, 95% confidence interval (CI) = −0.05 to 0.30) and scores of the non-targeted domains declined (−0.03, 95% CI = −0.11 to 0.04). Factors influencing sustainability were mainly related to 'processes', 'the inner context' and 'SLT characteristics', and these interacted dynamically to account for variation between teams.

Conclusions & Implications; Implementation outcomes (i.e., practice changes) were not sustained to the same level for three of the four participating SLT teams, with variable or partial sustainment most common. While the factors influencing sustainability differed depending on the context and individuals involved, the most important factor influencing outcomes seemed to be the level to which behaviour-change processes and strategies were embedded within the SLT department. Future implementation studies should incorporate sustainability measures from the onset and include follow-ups and monitoring systems to help support sustained change in the long term.