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ABSTRACT

Purpose

People with aphasia often present with higher levels of emotional distress than people without aphasia. Coping strategies are behaviors or thoughts that can help individuals reduce the negative impact of stress on one's well-being, yet a sparsity of studies have sought to examine the coping strategies used by people with aphasia. The purpose of this scoping review was to (a) determine the extent to which coping strategies are examined in the aphasia literature and (b) summarize and evaluate the research findings on this subject.

Methods

PubMed, Web of Science, and PsychINFO were systematically searched for articles that explored coping strategies used by people with chronic aphasia. Research methods and coping strategies identified from all included articles were extracted and charted in Excel. A thematic analysis was used to organize and synthesize the findings.

Results

Four hundred thirty-six unique articles were found, and 19 articles met the inclusion/exclusion criteria for this review. Of the 19 articles included, 14 studies used a qualitative research methodology approach to explore coping strategies in people with aphasia. The thematic analysis generated six distinct themes of coping strategies, listed in order of most frequent use: cognitive strategies, social support, community engagement, behavioral strategies, resources, and spirituality.

Conclusions

Cognitive strategies were the most commonly identified theme of coping strategies reported by people with aphasia. However, our findings suggest that coping strategies are heavily interconnected with each other and do not occur in isolation. Future research may benefit from exploring how cognitive strategies can be trained as an adjunct to routine language rehabilitation for people with aphasia to promote positive adaptation following aphasia.