COMMUNICATION DISORDERS: Prevalence and Cost in the United States

According to one study, approximately 40 million Americans have communication disorders, costing the U.S. an estimated $154 billion to $186 billion annually. Intervention is likely to be much more effective and much less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.

PREVALENCE OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Speech
- Approximately 7.5 million people in the United States have trouble using their voices.
- By the first grade, roughly 5 percent of children have noticeable speech disorders.
- More than 3 million Americans stutter.

Language
- Between 6 and 8 million people in the U.S. have some form of language impairment.
- Roughly one million persons in the U.S. suffer from aphasia (the inability to use or understand language).

Hearing
- 31.5 million Americans have hearing loss.
- According to an AARP-American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 2011 poll of ARRP members, 47% of respondents reported having untreated hearing loss.
- 1 in 5 Americans (48 million people) have hearing loss in at least one ear.
- Roughly 26 million Americans ages 20-69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud noises.

COST OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

- The Centers for Disease Control estimate that the lifetime costs for all people with hearing loss born in the year 2000 will total $2.1 billion. Most of these costs will come from lost wages due to inability or limited ability to work.
- Five studies on early detection and intervention have shown that future benefits exceed treatment costs at a ratio as high as 7 to 1.