The Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) conference, Clinical Populations with CAPD, What We Know and What Lies Ahead, was held in conjunction with AudiologyNOW! 2014 in Orlando on March 28-29.

Approximately 220 attended to hear some of the foremost researchers and clinicians in the world discuss CAPD and related issues. Program chair Gail Chermak and conference cochairs Frank Musiek and Doris Bamiou assembled a highly relevant and interesting agenda. In addition, 33 posters were presented covering current issues in CAPD. Similar to the highly successful 2012 conference, this year’s program attendees, poster presenters, and speakers represented countries from all over the world.

On Friday night, the first keynote presentation was delivered by Ken Hugdahl from the Department of Biological and Medical Psychology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway. World renowned for his work on dichotic listening, Dr. Hugdahl presented a review of his dichotic listening work including findings in various clinical populations. He also emphasized the importance of the interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing to fully understand the processing of dichotically presented stimuli.

Next, Dr. Nicci Campbell from London introduced the poster session where attendees and faculty mixed to discuss the new research presented.
At 8:00 am Saturday morning, Paula Tallal, from the Salk Institute and the University of California at San Diego, presented the second keynote address, kicking off a full day of activities. Dr. Tallal reviewed some of her early work on rapid auditory processing and described how that early research was developed into key methodologies used today in auditory training. She emphasized the value of auditory training and how it results in both behavioral and physiological changes in the auditory system.

Dr. Tallal was followed by Dr. Shivashankar from the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, in Bangalore, India. He provided an intriguing clinical research presentation revealing the value of tests of central auditory function in a wide variety of clinical populations. He ended his lecture with a fascinating case of pure word deafness.

The next speaker was Vivian Illiadou, from Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece. Dr. Illiadou reported on her research and clinical work on CAPD in individuals with mental health issues. This emerging area has revealed that some kinds of mental health problems such as schizophrenia have strong links to deficits on certain auditory processing tests.

Mridula Sharma, from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, was the next researcher to speak. Dr. Sharma discussed the value of utilizing auditory-evoked potential measurements to help diagnose children with CAPD. She also presented new data on how these evoked potential measurements were used to evaluate changes secondary to auditory training in children with CAPD.

Dr. Harvey Dillon from the National Acoustic Laboratories in Sydney, Australia, followed with a presentation of his research on over 600 children from the Australian Hearing CAPD service with spatial processing disorders and dichotic deficits. He discussed how recruitment criteria, cognitive function, and the severity of otitis media can influence the detection of these disorders.

Following lunch, Dr. Eliane Schochat from the University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil, gave a talk concerning the importance of utilizing electrophysiological procedures along with behavioral tests to diagnose and treat patients with central auditory processing deficits due to left temporal lobe epilepsy. She also discussed the encouraging advances being made in patients with traumatic brain injury after participating in formal auditory training.

Dr. Frederick Gallun from the National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research in Portland, Oregon, presented next on his research from two studies involving the significant central auditory processing difficulties of military service members with blast exposure, both those incurred recently as well as over the past decade.

Gail Chermak, from Washington State University, focused the discussion on intervention with a beautiful review of the underlying constructions that have led to Chermak’s and Musiek’s comprehensive approach to intervention for CAPD. The extensive research in a number of intersecting areas, most all rooted in neuroscience, have documented significant contributions of both cognition and audition to central auditory processing, which she highlighted during her discussion of efficient and effective intervention.

Suzanne Purdy, from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, continued the focus on intervention with a review of current and future approaches for the treatment of CAPD. Dr. Purdy emphasized the importance of considering multiple treatment approaches based on the complexity of the auditory and cognitive links in CAPD.

Based on attendees’ positive feedback, it appears that this second global conference on CAPD’s coverage of a wide array of clinically focused topics was of keen interest to both clinicians and clinical scientists. The success of this conference also reflects the worldwide interest in CAPD. As interest in this area continues to grow, there will be an ever-greater demand for services and continuing education. It is more than fair to say that both the faculty and participants look forward to future conferences on CAPD.

It should be noted that the global conference was kindly supported by the American Academy of Audiology and would not have been possible without the hard work of Lisa Yonkers, senior director of professional advancement at the Academy. Also, sincere thanks to The Royal Arch Research Assistance and Plural Publishing for their continued support of CAPD and this conference.

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