

# **A Stuttering Institute is Founded**

E. Boberg and D. Kully

In 1972 a new group therapy program for stutterers was offered through the University of Alberta Hospitals. Four adult clients were enrolled in an intensive experimental program modelled on one developed in Australia by Roger Ingham and Gavin Andrews (1973). The initial results were so promising that a similar clinic was offered each summer, with modifications made from year to year. Some concepts and strategies have been deleted while others have been added, particularly from the works of Perkins (1973, 1979), Van Riper (1973) and Owen (1981) as well as from our own experiences, and integrated into a Comprehensive Stuttering Treatment Program (1985).

The initial clinical service for adults was broadened to include treatment for children and adolescents as well as advanced training for students and clinicians. By 1984 there were so many requests for treatment and training that we decided to expand into a multipurpose organization, the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR).

This paper describes the objectives, operations and organization of ISTAR.

## **OBJECTIVES AND OPERATION OF THE INSTITUTE**

Four objectives have been established for ISTAR:

1. To provide clinical services to stuttering children and adults;
2. To stimulate, coordinate and conduct research into the nature, prevention and treatment of stuttering;
3. To provide advanced clinical and academic experiences for students and speech-language pathologists;
4. To serve as a community resource centre.

### **Clinical Services**

From 1972 through 1982 the clinical program was limited by lack of space, as we could operate only during the summer months when the university facilities were available. Since the institute has acquired its own space, clinical services have been expanded to operate on a full year basis. Clinical services offered by ISTAR include consultative services, establishment and transfer programs and follow-up programs.

Consultative services involve short-term assessment as well as extended evaluation such as diagnostic therapy. Subsequent recommendations and treatment suggestions are detailed for the referring speech-language pathologist.

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Einer Boberg and Deborah Kully  
University of Alberta

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Fluency establishment and transfer programs are offered on various schedules, ranging from intensive 3-week programs involving 7 hours of daily therapy, to flexible extended schedules involving a variable number of hours per week. The majority of intensive 3-week programs are conducted in the spring and summer (May through August or September), whereas most extended programs are offered in the fall and winter. Treatment within the intensive programs is preferred for most clients from preadolescence through adulthood since this schedule permits concentrated practice of new skills within a highly supportive group setting. Further, an intensive schedule with a definite time period is often the only practical option for non-local clients, given their need to make travel plans. Extended programs are available for clients who are unable to attend intensive programs or for whom such an intensive schedule is not suitable. Young children are generally treated within flexible extended programs, but intensive daily treatment may sometimes be arranged.\*

The institute has established various follow-up services in an attempt to meet the needs of different clients. Such services include weekly or bimonthly sessions for individuals and small groups, weekend refresher clinics and 5-day refresher clinics during the summer. Since many clients are non-local and therefore unable to return to the clinic for weekly sessions, a cooperative program involving the client's local speech-language pathologist is often arranged. Such an arrangement might involve regular sessions with the local clinician in combination with participation in the institute's refresher clinics. The institute may also consider referrals for refresher clinics in cases where clients' initial treatment involved techniques similar to those used at the institute. Such cases would be considered on an individual basis.

### **Research Program**

Basic and applied research is an important objective in ISTAR. We are expanding the current electrophysiological investigations of CNS differences in stutterers and developing procedures to investigate systematically the effectiveness and efficiency of various treatment components. The institute will organize international conferences on various aspects of stuttering and assist in the clinical application of research developments. As soon as funds are available, we will establish a visiting scientist program, inviting clinical researchers from Canada and other countries to use our facilities and join the staff in research projects.

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\* Further information about the clinical services may be obtained by writing to:

Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research  
4th Floor, 8540 - 109 Street, Edmonton, Alta. T6G 1E6

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## **Professional Training**

In response to the growing number of speech-language pathologists who seek additional training in the area of stuttering, ISTAR will expand opportunities for visiting clinicians to gain advanced training and at the same time continue to provide clinical practicum experiences for local and visiting students.

Clinical trainees will attend a 2-day preclinic training program and then participate in all aspects of the 3-week intensive clinics. As soon as possible, we will introduce academic seminars in combination with the clinical training. These will allow students to study recent developments in research and gain academic or continuing education credit while participating in a clinical program. The institute will apply to CASLPA, ASHA and other appropriate bodies for certification as an approved sponsor of continuing education programs.

The institute will solicit funds for scholarships to enable more students to attend these training sessions.

## **Community Resource**

As funds become available, ISTAR will establish a library of relevant books, journals, films, clinical tests and treatment programs. This material will be available to community and visiting professionals. Institute staff will be available for lectures, workshops and assistance in the preparation and dissemination of information about stuttering to parents, allied professionals and employers.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE INSTITUTE**

### **Funding**

The establishment of ISTAR was made possible through grants from the Elks associations. At their 1986 annual meeting, the Alberta Elks Association voted to make the institute a special project by providing a generous annual contribution. This financial commitment enabled ISTAR to lease space in a building near the university campus. The National Elks Purple Cross Fund has agreed to provide additional support through a grant for the purchase of equipment for the institute. In addition, the fund will continue to give financial aid to families who need help to enable their children to attend the institute clinics. This program is available throughout Canada and can be accessed by contacting a local Elks club or the Regina office of the Purple Cross Fund:

**Elks Purple Cross Fund**  
3420A Hill Avenue  
Regina, Sask. S4S 0W9

Other financial help may be available through local school boards, social service departments, services clubs or corporations.

The institute will receive no money from the university, government agencies or the provincial health insurance plan. All operating costs (professional and clerical

salaries, supplies, telephones, etc.) will be derived from clinic fees, which will be adjusted periodically to cover such costs. The institute seeks additional donations from corporations, service clubs and individuals to support clinical expansion, student scholarships and specific research projects.

## **Structure**

The institute has been established as a nonprofit society affiliated with the University of Alberta and registered under the Alberta Societies Act. It is governed by a board of directors consisting of institute staff and representatives from the Elks association and the University of Alberta. Responsibility for the daily management of the institute will rest with an executive director and a clinical director. Advisory boards will be established in the near future.

## **Facilities and Staff**

During its genesis, the institute operated in space within the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology of the University of Alberta. The grant from the Alberta Elks Association enabled us to lease space in a building near the university campus. The 3800 square feet of newly renovated space includes nine clinic rooms, four offices, a research laboratory, observation rooms, an audiovisual room, a boardroom, space for clinical trainees and reception areas. The clinic is equipped with video cameras and recorders, audio recorders, electronic behaviour counters and a computerized system for counting and recording responses.

The present staff consists of an executive director, a clinical director, a clinical coordinator and an office manager. During the most active clinical period, May through August, the staff will expand to include several staff clinicians and 15 to 20 trainees. Trainees will have an opportunity to obtain supervised clinical hours to be used toward certification requirements. As ISTAR expands, we expect to add clinical staff, a part-time technician and a position for a visiting scientist or post-doctoral student. We hope, within a short time, to have the capacity to provide assessment and treatment to over 200 clients per year.

## **Conclusions**

During the last two decades, we have seen much progress in the treatment of stuttering. Clinical reports from international centres have indicated substantial improvements in the effectiveness of therapy, even in the difficult area of long-term maintenance. Research laboratories have also published significant findings, which will soon be translated into improved clinical strategies. The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research will benefit from such progress as it seeks to make its own contributions in research and therapy.

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## References

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Ingham, R.J. and Andrews, G. (1973). Details of a token economy stuttering therapy program for adults. *Australian Journal of Human Communication Disorders*, 1, 13-20.

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## THE AWARDS COMMITTEE / LE COMITÉ DES DISTINCTIONS

**The Awards Committee of the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists** is offering a prize to the Canadian University Program with the highest percentage of student membership.

The contest begins September 1, 1987. A cash prize will be awarded to the student group of the winning university shortly after the tally to take place on January 31, 1988. The university will receive an engraved plaque at the awards ceremony of the 1988 conference in Banff.

*For further information contact:*

**Vincent Fleming**, Chair  
Committee on Awards  
Dr. Charles A. Janeway  
Child Health Centre  
Newfoundland Drive  
St. John's, Newfoundland A1A 1R8

**Le comité des distinctions de l'Association Canadienne des orthophonistes et audiologistes** a l'honneur d'offrir un prix au programme universitaire canadien donnant preuve du plus grand nombre de membres étudiants admis à l'ACOA.

Le concours débute le 1er septembre 1987. Le groupe étudiant choisi recevra une bourse d'argent peu après le comptage effectué par le comité le 31 janvier 1988. En plus, un certificat sera présenté à l'université elle-même lors de l'assemblée générale annuelle des membres qui aura lieu à Banff en 1988.

*Pour de plus amples renseignements s'adresser à:*

**Vincent Fleming**, Président  
Comité des Distinctions  
Dr Charles A. Janeway  
Child Health Centre  
Newfoundland Drive  
St. John's, Terre-Neuve A1A 1R8