

Editorial

Cognitive Bias in Audiology Research

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The featured article in this issue is authored by Galvin and colleagues (Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology, The University of Melbourne) and the topic is cognitive bias in audiology research.

Cognitive bias is defined as “...a systematic error in thinking that affects the decisions and judgments that people make” (Cherry, 2019).

There are many different types of cognitive bias, including:

- Anchoring bias: The tendency to accept those opinions and beliefs that are closest to our own,
- Confirmation bias: The tendency to accept evidence in support of our own view, and
- Availability bias: The acceptance of evidence that is more readily available, rather than evidence that is more valid that may be more difficult to obtain.

The investigators referenced a survey of audiologists who reported using a number of sources to make clinical decisions, with audiometric results, clinical experience, and opinion rated as more important than peer-reviewed articles and expert opinion.

The authors described a number of investigations attesting to the reliability of audiologists in determining when patients are candidates for hearing aids, but varied in their assessment of the importance of the types of information used to make that judgment.

The investigators also referenced past research suggesting the presence of trends in the dispensing behavior of audiologists. For example, the authors reported that

more hearing aid features were dispensed by female audiologists and more features were recommended to younger patients versus older patients.

With this as an abbreviated background, the investigators conducted a systematic review of studies that tested “...interventions aimed at countering the impact of cognitive biases in ...audiology.” Further, the investigators were interested in identifying “...studies in which an intervention, strategy, or procedure was implemented with the aim of reducing the impact of cognitive bias on the decision-making of audiologists.”

The authors developed criteria for the articles that would be included in this systematic review. Before using the criteria, they identified 201 full-text articles that were potential candidates for inclusion in the investigation.

I think that you may be surprised by the number of studies selected, out of the 201 that could be included in the investigation, once the inclusion criteria were applied.

The Editors hope you enjoy the February 2020 issue of the Journal.

Gary P. Jacobson, PhD
Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCE

Cherry K. (2019) “How Cognitive Biases Influence How You Think and Act.” Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-cognitive-bias-2794963>, accessed Dec. 27, 2019.