



KEYNOTE SPEAKER SUMMARIES



British Aphasiology Society Conference 2024
16th-18th September 2024



We are very excited to announce our list of keynote speakers for the BAS Conference 2024, hosted by De Montfort University, Leicester. This is a hybrid conference, with options for in-person and online attendance. The conference programme spans three full days and explores three strands: aphasia theory, clinical practice and future directions.

With thanks to our sponsors:

The Tavistock Trust for Aphasia



MONDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER

Dr Aura Kagan

*Executive Advisor: Strategy, Research and
Education Aphasia Institute*



Variation in aphasia treatment: Who decides?

This presentation aims to raise questions regarding variation in aphasia treatment. Examples of issues that will be explored include the impact of what is valued from the perspective of system level decision-makers, the impact of teaching and research paradigms, the value of individual case studies alongside group studies, individual values of therapists regarding areas such as 'who gets to make decisions about treatment', and, finally, how to best ensure that the values of the person with aphasia are taken into account in relation to treatment choices. An aphasia outcome framework will be presented for practical use by both the therapist and the person with aphasia.

Dr Argye Hillis

*Professor of Neurology, Physical
Medicine & Rehabilitation, and
Cognitive Science*



Treatment of aphasia by mechanism

I will review two complementary approaches to individualizing aphasia therapy, based on (1) the cognitive mechanism(s) underlying the language deficits, and (2) the neural mechanisms that, if restored, are likely to result in language improvement. The first approach requires detailed analysis of the cognitive processes underlying the deficit (an approach that stemmed from Cognitive Neuropsychology, which I used extensively in the 1980's and 1990's). The second requires determining the neural mechanisms of recovery that are most likely to result in gains in function for the individual, at that specific time, such as reperfusion of dysfunctional tissue, resolution of diaschisis, or remapping of language to supplemental networks involved in language. This approach, which I have relied on extensively in this millennium, requires advanced imaging, such as perfusion or functional imaging.

TUESDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER

Dr Swathi Kiran

Founding director, Centre for Brain Recovery



Using AI/ML to predict recovery in post-stroke aphasia: moving towards precision medicine.

In this talk, I will present our ongoing work aimed at predicting language recovery after acquired brain injury, particularly after a stroke. I will present our work on developing algorithms to predict aphasia recovery in both monolingual and bilingual adults with aphasia. Our goal is to predict individualized/personalized recovery trajectories based on algorithms from brain markers, big data, and computational modelling. Our recent work has potential to provide personalized recommendations for rehabilitation trajectories for individual patients who have suffered from acquired brain injury.

Professor Chris Code



Reasons to be cheerful? The present and future of Clinical Aphasia Research

I plan to present an overview of current approaches to aphasia rehabilitation that we think we know are the most successful approaches, and those that appear to have the most potential for the future. In this way I hope to pick up on the main themes of the conference addressed in the keynote presentations. Topics I hope to cover pertain to both impairment and disability approaches, and are: the role of (psycho)linguistics, computational and neuroscientific developments, psychosocial and conversational issues. In this way I hope to say something about the challenges facing clinical aphasia research and where it is going.

Professor David Howard

Newcastle University



Treating word retrieval in aphasia; thinking about *how* treatments work.

I will review some of our and others' work on treatment of word retrieval and show that the improvements found are almost wholly item-specific. When we look at the evidence from facilitation and treatment studies there is no evidence that 'semantic' treatment improves semantics. I'll argue that both 'semantic' and 'phonological' treatments work for the same people and in the same way – by improving the mapping between semantics and lexical phonological representations.

WEDNESDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER

Professor Cathy Price

*Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience Imaging
and Neuroscience*



How understanding brain function impacts aphasia management

Understanding, predicting and treating post-stroke aphasia is challenging because aphasia recovery and treatment effects typically vary substantially, even among individual patients with the same initial symptom severity and therapy input. This variability is not random. It depends on multiple and measurable factors, most notably the structural integrity of the brain, which determines the severity of the presenting symptoms and the capacity available for recovery. I will demonstrate (i) how brain imaging can be used to predict the degree of recovery, (ii) how and when these predictions are most accurate and (iii) the relevance of these findings for treating aphasia.

Professor Matt Lambon-Ralph

Unit Director MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit

