

Etiology: An Editorial on the Prevention of Communication Disorders

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To inaugurate this new on-line, open-source journal, I would like to highlight communication disorders in general and their causation in particular. Independent researchers and theoreticians, in my lifetime and throughout the history of science, have valued the discovery, dissemination, and subsequent uptake of ideas that advance knowledge. Unsurprisingly, scientific advances depend on faithful records of actual experience examined by competent peer-reviewers and readers. Science requires true reports of actual events just as health depends on valid interpretations of biological control systems from genetics upward through the epigenetic systems of immune defenses [1], maintenance and repair, and all of the organs, and organismic interactions necessary to viable eco-systems. In addition to true reporting, paradigmatic change always requires imagination, hypothesizing, and reconceptualizing. Even errors, once discovered, can help to advance knowledge. Only ignorance, deception, and secrets, are inimical to the interests of science. For such reasons, it is refreshing to introduce a new on-line open-source journal publishing invaluable peer-reviewed work, free for all.

An academic friend once observed that we did not become researchers and theoreticians in the hope of making lots of money. It was our purpose to seek out true ideas of immeasurable value that we could freely share with others. In the foundational area of communication disorders, who could place a dollar value the discovery of the causes of epidemic conditions such as autism [2-4], ADHD, premature births, dysfluencies, encephalopathies, sudden infant death syndrome, Parkinsonism, Alzheimer's, or pick a category. Whereas the cost of treating any designated category can be measured in many ways, how could we measure the value of preventing one or more of these conditions? In the Preface to one of the many translations of the *Art of War* compiled by Sun Tze, a story is told concerning two brothers: One of them was a physician famous for curing diseases. However, his elder brother, the physician said, was greater than himself because the

brother could prevent disorders and diseases. The work of the elder brother, however, was not noticed so much.

In the field of communication disorders, perhaps the most neglected area in the scope of practice of speech-language pathologists and audiologists is prevention [5]. Yet to prevent disorders it is necessary first and foremost to seek out their causes. Let this editorial serve as a call for papers seeking out causes with a view toward prevention. The work can be guided in part, at least, by the sure knowledge that all disorders, disease conditions, and even death itself involve breakdowns in the biological control systems that enable health and well-being. Understanding the disruptive factors that cause such breakdowns [6] will go a long way toward enabling their prevention. Also we know now for a certainty that certain environmental toxins are causally involved [7].

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