

A Message From Your Editors:

Volume 1, Issue III, February 2012

Welcome to the third issue of SPAU@Stern!

We are thrilled to begin the spring semester with another issue of SPAU@Stern! This is definitely our most diverse issue to date. Not only does it include articles on an exciting variety of contemporary topics within the fields of speech pathology and audiology- from the challenge of hearing testing on children on the autistic spectrum to the prevalence of vocal fry in young women- you may be surprised to discover an article highlighting one of the most popular current TV series: Glee! This is also our first issue featuring the writings of members of the Junior class, as well as an article by a student who is a biology major. We are pleased to announce that SPAU@Stern can be found on the web. Check us out at <http://yu.edu/stern/ug/speech-pathology-audiology/about/>.



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In this issue:

Volunteer at Lenox Hill Hospital	2
Audiology and ASDs	3
Audiology Research at Stern College	4
Where Glee Stands	5
Vocal Fry: The New Female Fad	6

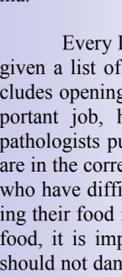
Thank you for all of your contributions and support.

With warm regards,

Chani Markel & Davina Simhaee

My Volunteer Experience at Lenox Hill Hospital

By: **Gabrielle TaidKashani**



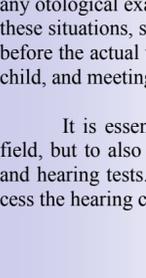
This semester, I have the privilege of volunteering twice a week at the speech pathology department at Lenox Hill Hospital. The speech-language pathologists at Lenox Hill specialize in swallowing services. They test patients who have had any type of injury or developmental disorder that could affect their ability to swallow. During my time volunteering, I often observe a Videofluoroscopic Swallowing Study (VFSS). The VFSS involves feeding the patient foods and drinks of different consistencies. The patient is taken to the radiology department where an X-ray is placed near the patient's neck. Barium is added to the food and drinks so they are visible on the screen. This allows the speech pathologists to see how well a patient can move the muscles of his or her oral cavity. They are primarily concerned with aspiration, or fluids penetrating the airway for respiration. As the patient swallows the food or drink, the speech pathologists look for signs of aspiration such as coughing, throat clearing, gurgling or drooling. The speech pathologists then analyze the video of the patient's swallow to see where the food enters after the swallow. They determine whether the food is properly entering into the esophagus or, more dangerously, the pharynx, where food can reach the trachea. It is the therapists' responsibility to determine which types of consistencies are safest for the patient to ingest in order to prevent them from aspirating, which can lead to choking or pneumonia.

Every Friday, I visit patients who need help with set-ups or feedings. I am given a list of the patients who need assistance setting up their food, which includes opening packages and cutting their food into smaller pieces. My most important job, however, is checking the patients' diets to see if the speech pathologists put them on thickened liquids. I make sure that their food or drinks are in the correct consistency and if they are not, I add thickeners. For the patients who have difficulty feeding, I have to ensure that they are chewing and swallowing their food instead of keeping it in their mouths. Before these patients eat their food, it is important for them to be sitting in an upright position. Their heads should not dangle, which can cause the food or drinks to go down the trachea. For both set-ups and feedings, I must report to a speech pathologist if the patient shows any signs of aspiration or if they complain of pain or discomfort while they are eating. If there are patients with an NPO sign on their door, I ensure that there is no food in their rooms. The sign indicates that the patient is on an NPO diet, which means "no food by mouth."

Volunteering at Lenox Hill Hospital has been a very informative and rewarding experience. It is exciting for me to observe speech-language pathologists who not only deal with problems of language and articulation, but also work with patients with dysphasia. Speech pathologists in a hospital setting are faced with a unique set of challenges, and I am grateful that I have been given the opportunity to gain a great deal of hands-on exposure to their work.

"Audiology and ASDs"

By **Rachel Tzippi King**



It's easy to take the ability to communicate with patients for granted, even for an audiologist who may have to work with patients suffering from hearing loss. But when it comes to children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD, the audiologist will realize the importance of even the most minimal communication. It is up to the audiologist, working with the patient and his or her caregivers, to provide a safe, comfortable, and effective exam environment.

While ASD manifests itself differently in every case, common symptoms include speech and language delay, interest in repetitive behaviors, and the avoidance of eye contact. A 2005 article in "Seminars in Hearing" notes that audiologists may sometimes be the first health professionals to recognize ASD symptoms in a child, since the parents often have the child's hearing tested when he or she is unresponsive. Consequently, it's important for the audiologist to be able to recognize these symptoms, and make the necessary referrals.

"WHILE ASD MANIFESTS ITSELF DIFFERENTLY IN EVERY CASE, COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DELAY, INTEREST IN REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS, AND THE AVOIDANCE OF EYE CONTACT."

Once it's established that a patient has an ASD, the audiologist still has the responsibility of performing the hearing exam. Dr. Rebecca Davis and Dr. Lillian Stiegler outline in their 2010 article for The ASHA Leader, "Behavioral Hearing Assessment for Children with Autism," what an audiologist can expect when dealing with a child with an ASD. Such patients will often react negatively to changes in routine, and to unfamiliar people and surroundings. Some ASD patients are also hypersensitive to sound and touch, crucial components of any otological exam. The article provides some important pointers for dealing with these situations, such as having the child visit the office and test area several times before the actual test, presenting videos describing the upcoming procedures to the child, and meeting with parents or guardians to devise the testing strategy.

It is essential for an audiologist not only to be trained in his or her own field, but to also be informed about other health concerns that can affect hearing and hearing tests. In this way, the audiologist can ensure that all patients can access the hearing care they need.

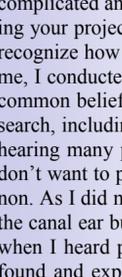
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Audiology Research at Stern College

By: **Avigayil Goldson**

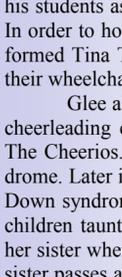


As graduation is quickly approaching for the seniors at Stern College, graduate school application deadlines are approaching even faster. When researching graduate programs, many undergraduate students realize the importance of having research experience. At the beginning of this school year, I had little interest in research and did not know why some people were so enthusiastic about it. This quickly changed with a visit to the office of my professor, Dr. Danto. I decided to ask him if he thought it was a good idea for me to do a research project and if he had any ideas of topics that I might like to research. After some discussion, Dr. Danto suggested that I look at personal media players and see if there is a difference in their sound level production. I decided to expand the project to include different use levels and types of headphones. Dr. Danto gave me the equipment that I needed to measure the sound levels, and I got my friend's iPods and headphones and started measuring. After collecting my data, I was able to analyze it, compare it to other research that I found on the topic, and am currently writing up my findings.

This research experience opened a new set of doors for me. I now understand why people are so excited about research, questioning the unknown and trying to find the answer to something others may have also pondered. Doing this research project not only showed me that I could ask the questions and find the answers, but also taught me something and helped me discover who I want to be as an audiologist. I realized that research does not have to be incredibly complicated and hard to understand. If you start at the basics, you can keep expanding your project into something increasingly complex and interesting. I was able to understand how much I could do on my own. With Dr. Danto there to check in with me, I conducted the research and found the results independently. I looked into the common beliefs on personal media players, and was surprised to find that most research, including my own, disproved what the media is currently advocating. After hearing many people talk about how they don't like to use ear buds because they don't want to put anything in their ears, I wanted to see if this was a real phenomenon. As I did my research and read other's research, I found that noise canceling in the canal ear buds have the least noise exposure. It was exciting for me to speak up when I heard people introduce this topic of conversation and to talk about what I found and explain to them why they were wrong. Research may not interest you right from the outset, but can be a valuable skill for the future. If nothing else, it can definitely boost your resume. While conducting research might seem like a daunting task, with the help of mentors and an open mind, you can uncover the results you never thought you would find.

Where Glee Stands

By: **Dana Silver**



Glee is a popular television show following a group of misfit students attending McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio. They join their high school's Glee Club as an outlet to express themselves and give them a greater sense of belonging in school. The creators and producers of Glee did something that is unique to most television shows. They cast actors with a variety of disabilities and depict their struggles on television.

One of the most well known characters, Artie, played by Kevin McHale, is part of the Glee Club and is paraplegic. While actor McHale does not have any physical disabilities, from the beginning of the show, his character was portrayed using a wheelchair. Unlike the other students in the Glee Club, Artie performs all of the dance numbers in his wheelchair. In the first season of the show, there was an entire episode themed around discrimination towards individuals with physical disabilities. The episode revealed that the intolerance he was facing was primarily coming from the members of the Glee Club. In order to teach them a lesson about being sensitive to those with disabilities, the faculty leader of the Glee Club, Mr. Shue, instructs the students to spend a few hours a day using a wheelchair for one week. It opened the eyes of his students as see how tactless and intolerant they were behaving towards Artie. In order to honor their fellow glee-mate, the all of the students in Glee Club performed Tina Turner's classic song "Rolling on a River," singing and dancing in their wheelchairs.

"UNLIKE THE OTHER STUDENTS IN THE GLEE CLUB, ARTIE PERFORMS ALL OF THE DANCE NUMBERS IN HIS WHEELCHAIR."

Glee also casts actors with Down syndrome. Sue Sylvester, the vindictive cheerleading coach, allows Becky Jackson on the school's cheerleading squad, The Cheerios. Becky, played by Lauren Potter, is a young girl with Down syndrome. Later in the episode, the viewer learns that Sue's older sister Jean also had Down syndrome. She was close to her sister and was devastated to see the way children taunted Jean for having a disability. Witnessing the poor treatment of her sister when she was young made Sue become a more callous person. When her sister passes away in the following season of the show, Sue treats Becky as if she was her own daughter. She takes Becky under her wing and tries as hard as she can to treat her just like any other student. Under her later becomes a head cheerleader with fellow Cheerio and Glee member, Santana. Both Becky and Jean's characters were casted by actors who actually have Down syndrome.

So what is Glee trying to show by featuring these actors on the show? Is it just trying to make people more aware of individuals with disabilities? One prominent aspect of Glee is their stance with the growing anti-bullying campaign. Glee takes every opportunity to show that there should be no tolerance for bullying, and there should be no exceptions made for children with disabilities. The show also wants to demonstrate that there is no reason why these teenagers should be treated any differently by their peers. Glee tries to highlight their similarities, rather than their differences, to underscore the notion that students with disabilities should be treated just like everybody else.

Vocal Fry: The New Female Fad

By: **Zahava Stuchins**



Vocal Fry is "a speech sound or quality used in some languages, produced by vibrating vocal cords that are less tense than in normal speech, which produces local turbulence in the airstream resulting in a compromise between full voice and whisper." In other words, vocal fry refers to low, guttural vibrations used in speech to reach low notes. While vocal fry was once considered a symptom of a voice disorder, data reported by Science Magazine in December indicates that this type of speech may be a new fad amongst young women. The article quotes a study conducted by the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the C.W Post campus of Long Island University. The researchers conducting the study analyzed sentences read by 34 female speakers and concluded that two thirds of the participants used vocal fry, mostly at the ends of sentences. Luckily, the fact that vocal fry was generally only used at the ends of sentences and not continuously throughout speech indicates that it probably will not damage vocal folds.

It is also interesting to note that vocal fry became somewhat of a trend in the celebrity world as well. Famous pop singers such as Britney Spears and Ke\$ha often use vocal fry in order to hit notes they would not otherwise be able to reach. Dr. Nassima Abdelli-Beruh, speech scientist and one of the C.W. Post researchers who conducted the study, reports hearing vocal fry used by radio announcers on popular music stations and would like to study this connection further.

It is not completely clear what has caused this unusual "epidemic," but it is interesting to become aware of this phenomenon in our own speech and in the speech of those around us.

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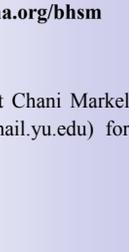
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Announcements and Upcoming Events:

Student Ethics Essay Award

"ASHA is pleased to announce the seventh annual Student Ethics Essay Award (SEEA) competition. This program is conducted as part of ASHA's efforts to enhance ethics education activities. The SEEA is designed to provide opportunities for NSSLHA members who are undergraduate or graduate students in communication sciences and disorders (CSD) to think about ethical decision making as they prepare to start careers in audiology, speech-language pathology, or speech, language, and hearing sciences. The goal of the SEEA is to create greater awareness of situations individuals in CSD careers may encounter that could pose ethical dilemmas and options for addressing these dilemmas." For more information, please look at http://www.asha.org/Practice/ethics/essay_award/



May is Better Hearing and Speech Month

"This annual event provides opportunities to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote treatment that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding, or hearing. We have many resources to help you celebrate BHSM every day." For ways to get involved, look at <http://www.asha.org/bhsm>



Positions available!

Interested in becoming an editor for SPAU@Stern? Contact Chani Markel (Chani12@optonline.net) or Davina Simhaee (Davina.simhaee@mail.yu.edu) for more information.

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