

In a recent letter to the editor, Roger and Janis Ingham suggested that the lack of peer-reviewed data on the SpeechEasy made distribution of the device potentially unprofessional. While their concerns hold validity, their arguments may fall short of encapsulating a holistic perspective of stuttering management.

As a speech pathologist, I agree that it would have been ideal to complete clinical testing before bringing the device to market. However, the dynamic nature of stuttering often confounds measurements of treatment efficacy, often providing invalid data which may not reliably predict long-term real life results. In the meantime, we continue offering behavioral therapies, while the occurrence of adult relapse remains epidemic and the success rate for stuttering children struggles to surpass the naturally occurring percentage of spontaneous recovery.

As a person who stutters, I appreciate the inclusion of prosthetic stuttering management because it provides new choices for people who stutter. However, the development of prosthetic devices for such a small population is most likely fiscally impractical for most manufacturers. Consequently, production of prosthetic devices often requires the help of venture capitalists, who deserve compensation for their risk and investment. With over 100 peer-reviewed and published articles detailing the fluency enhancing effects of speech feedback, the potential benefits of early distribution may outweigh the risks; time will be ultimately reveal reality. In the meantime, we should inform clients that the compelling fluency enhancement via speech feedback is not a panacea, and its prosthetic implementation continues to be tested and improved.