Stroke is the most common cause of speech disturbance in adults. Aphasia and dysarthria are the two major types of speech disturbances noted in stroke survivors. Clinicians are frequently challenged with diagnosis because of “stroke mimics” that may produce speech disturbances like that caused by stroke. Studies have shown that 20-30% of patients with speech disturbance turn out to have a “stroke mimic”. In the era of acute and chronic stroke treatment, it is important to distinguish “stroke mimics” from the true stroke syndromes. Common causes for “stroke mimics” can be broadly categorized into metabolic, central nervous system (CNS) and psychiatric abnormalities. They produce speech patterns that may be distinguished by their characteristics, temporal pattern and associated symptoms. Diagnostic tests, although useful, may sometimes be challenged with diagnostic accuracy of the specific disorder. For example, in CNS disorders, such as seizure, multiple sclerosis and migraine, speech disturbances may produce MR imaging abnormalities. The current MR imaging paradigm does not detect abnormalities in psychiatric disorders producing speech disturbances. Diagnostic distinction of speech disturbances caused by stroke and those caused by “stroke mimics” may have important therapeutic implications.

C-STAR LECTURE SERIES

The Center for the Study of Aphasia Recovery (C-STAR; http://cstar.sc.edu/lecture-series/) houses researchers who examine the effects of behavioral treatment, brain stimulation, and residual brain function (brain plasticity) on recovery from aphasia. C-STAR is a collaboration between researchers from the University of South Carolina, the Medical University of South Carolina, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of California, Irvine. The Center is funded through the National Institute of Deafness and Communication Disorders (NIDCD) grant #NIH P50 DC014664. Biweekly public lectures, given by members and guests of C-STAR, are accessible live and online. Recordings of the lectures can be viewed via C-STAR YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8p0CuG4He9nqCR4nnzhZ7w