

Project Number: CC006

Title: Understanding speech processing abilities and their relationship to PSD in children born with cleft palate. (The SPARC study)

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Scientific Outline:

Children born with cleft palate are at high risk of developing disordered speech articulation patterns known as Cleft Speech Characteristics (CSCs) and subsequently Persistent Speech Disorder (PSD). PSD is associated with an increased risk of poor outcomes later in life. Speech processing is an integral part of successful speech development in all children. Poor speech processing could be contributing to an increased risk of PSD in some children born with cleft palate who have CSCs. However, these skills are not routinely examined in the UK as the consequences for speech of inadequate anatomy are the primary focus.

This project aims to understand speech processing abilities and their relationship to PSD in children born with cleft palate. If it is found that there are relationships between speech processing problems and PSD for many of these children, recommendations will be made regarding their management by Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs). Follow-on work will look at what interventions can be used to reduce speech processing problems.

This current study is funded by a Health Education England/National Institute of Health Research Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship hosted by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and sponsored by the University of Bristol. It is conducted in collaboration with the Cleft Collective Cohort studies and the Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit.

Participants in this study may also have been recruited to other research studies including the Cleft Collective – Five-Year-Old Cohort Study and the Timing of Palate Surgery (TOPS) trial (www.tops-trial.org.uk). Involvement in either or both of these other studies does not exclude potential participant families from taking part in this study. Their participation in other studies will be acknowledged and families will be free to decline involvement in this study.

Participants who are also taking part in the Cleft Collective Cohort Studies will be asked if they consent to the data they provide and that is collected as part of this study, to be linked to the data that they have provided to the Cleft Collective Cohort Studies.

This current proposal does not currently request to use Cleft Collective data.