APHASIA RESEARCH 3/8/16 K. GALARNO

Two UW-River Falls professors are testing the connection between electrical stimulation of the brain and a communication disorder. Katie Galarno has the story.  
  
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KATIE GALARNO: TWO SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AT UW-RIVER FALLS ARE USING ELECTRICAL BRAIN STIMULATION TO SEE IF IT HELPS PEOPLE WITH APHASIA (uh-FAY-zyuh) COMMUNICATE. APHASIA IS A DISORDER THAT MOST COMMONLY RESULTS FROM STROKES THAT IMPACT THE LANGUAGE SECTION OF THE BRAIN. NAOMI HASHIMOTO (HA-she-mo-toe) AND SHARYL SAMARGIA (suh-MARR-zyuh) ASK THAT THEIR PARTICIPANT BE CALLED “G.” AFTER SUFFERING A STROKE, G LOST THE ABILITY TO EASILY SAY THE RIGHT WORDS, A CHALLENGE THAT HASHIMOTO SAYS WAS DIFFICULT FOR G TO ACCEPT.

NAOMI HASHIMOTO: WELL SHE WAS A NURSE, SO THIS IS A BIG LOSS FOR HER BECAUSE SHE WAS A REALLY VERY VERBAL, VERY EDUCATED PERSON. I THINK SHE FEELS KEENLY THAT SHE DOESN’T GET PERCEIVED THAT WAY ANYMORE.

KATIE GALARNO: FOR 20 MINUTES MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, G RECEIVES A LOW ELECTRICAL CURRENT TO HER BRAIN FROM ELECTRODES. AFTER THAT, SHE SITS DOWN WITH HASHIMOTO FOR BEHAVIORAL THERAPY. SAMARGIA SAYS THAT THE GOAL IS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR G TO RECALL THE CORRECT WORDS.

SHARYL SAMARGIA: WE’RE HOPING BY DOING THAT, THEN WE CAN FIRE UP, OR WHAT’S CALLED UPREGULATE, WORKING MEMORY, SO THEN WHEN NAOMI IS GIVING HER BEHAVIORAL THERAPY TO THE SUBJECTS USING CUES AND ASKING QUESTIONS, THEY CAN HOLD THAT CUE IN THEIR WORKING MEMORY LONGER AND GET THOSE WORDS OUT MORE FLUENTLY.

KATIE GALARNO: HASHIMOTO AND SAMARGIA SAY THAT THEY WANT TO USE DATA FROM THIS STUDY AS THE BASE OF A LARGER STUDY IN THE FUTURE. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M KATIE GALARNO.

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