

Examining communication-related quality of life in individuals with  
hypophonia and Parkinson's disease  
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Hypophonia, or low speech intensity, is a common and often disabling consequence of Parkinson's disease (PD). The purpose of this study was to examine how participants with hypophonia rate their communication-related quality of life (CR-QoL) using the American Speech and Hearing Association's, Quality of Communication Life Scale (ASHA, QCL)<sup>1</sup>. Thirty individuals with hypophonia and PD participated in this study. Results revealed that participants rated their overall communication-related QoL as 3.7 out of a maximum score of 5 (S.D.=.455) and their general QoL as 4.0 out of a maximum score of 5 (S.D.=.765). Departing from the traditional scoring procedures outlined for interpretation of the ASHA QCL, an individual item analysis was conducted to explore the nature of the communication-related QoL profile. On average, participation in life situations that related specifically to speech intelligibility, confidence and ease of communication were found to have the largest negative impact on QoL. Overall, the implications of this study advocate for a comprehensive assessment of hypophonia in PD. Assessment should evaluate the full effect of the disability associated with hypophonia ranging from acoustic and perceptual measures to quality of life. Results of this study add potentially valuable information regarding the spectrum of disability associated with hypophonic speech.