Perception of Parkinsonian speech: Ratings by self and others vs. acoustic measures

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Acoustic analysis has revealed that individuals with Parkinson Disease (PD) have speech and voice deficits; however, these individuals may have difficulty perceiving their own deficits. These mismatches in production and perception have been primarily studied in loudness, but they may also exist in other areas such as pitch, rate, and pausing. In addition to self-perception and acoustics, the perception of listeners is an important factor to examine. The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between the acoustic characteristics of PD speech, the self-perception of speakers with PD, and the perception of listeners. For this study, pairs of participants have been examined, each consisting of an individual with PD and their spouse (speaker and listener, respectively). After a reading of the Rainbow passage, both speaker and listener completed a perceptual rating form based on the reading. For intensity / loudness, self-perception, others' perception, and acoustics matched well. Further, across all perceptual measures, individuals with PD rated themselves as consistently more severe than did their caregivers. Overall, the early results indicate that individuals with PD may not exhibit as severe a self-perception impairment as has been suggested by previous research.