

American Journal of **AUDIOLOGY**

Vol. 1 No. 2



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

A Journal of Clinical Practice

Editor Robert G. Turner
University of California, San Francisco, CA

Associate Editors

Prostheses Ruth A. Bentler <i>University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA</i>	Evoked Potentials Roger A. Ruth <i>University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA</i>
Pediatrics Barbara K. Cone-Wesson <i>University of Southern California, L A, CA</i>	Balance Function Neil T. Shepard <i>University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI</i>
Program Management Sheila M. Dalzell <i>The Hearing Center, Inc., Rochester, NY</i>	Rehabilitation Joseph J. Smaldino <i>University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA</i>
Diagnostics Martin S. Robinette <i>Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN</i>	

Feature Editors

Perspective Gail D. Chermak <i>Washington State University, Pullman, WA</i>	Site Visit Barbara S. Herrmann <i>Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, Boston, MA</i>
Feedback Michael R. Chial <i>University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI</i>	Face-to-Face Darrell E. Rose <i>Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL</i>
Consult Cynthia G. Fowler <i>VA Medical Center, Long Beach, CA</i>	

Assistant Editors

Shirley J. Alexander	Larry E. Dalzell	Annelle V. Hodges
Chris D. Bauch	Terry A. Zwolan	Donald J. Schum

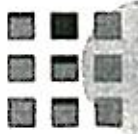
Editorial Consultants

Charles V. Anderson	John A. Ferraro	Robert H. Margolis	Richard C. Seewald
Kamren Barin	Terese Finitzo	Michael J. Metz	Robert V. Shannon
Carmen C. Brewer	Gregory J. Frazer	Frank E. Musiek	Dianna M. Smith
Robert H. Bray	Joel A. Goebel	P. Douglas Noffsinger	Patricia G. Stelmachowicz
Kathleen C. M. Campbell	Judith S. Gravel	Marlene G. Ochs	John E. Tecca
Michael J. Cevette	J. W. Hall III	Dana L. Oviatt	Aaron R. Thornton
Cynthia L. Compton	David B. Hawkins	David E. Palm	Richard S. Tyler
Carl C. Crandell	Gary P. Jacobson	Catherine V. Palmer	Conrad Wall III
David G. Cyr	Herbert N. Jordan	Robert J. Peterka	Bruce A. Weber
J. Michael Dennis	Jack E. Kile	Dale O. Robinson	Jerry L. Yanz
John D. Durrant	Paul R. Kilony	Brenda M. Ryals	
Jill L. Effenbein	Karen I. Kirk	Carol A. Sammeth	
David A. Fabry	Kazunari J. Koike	Daniel M. Schwartz	

Production Editor Susan T. Chasin

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike • Rockville, Maryland 20852

Business Manager: Frederick T. Spahr
Director, ASHA Publications Division: Joanne K. Jessen



You can call me Bob and you can call me Robert, but you can't call me Dr. Turner—at least not in the province of Ontario, Canada. Provincial Bill 43 of The Regulation of Health Professions Acts restricts the use of

the title doctor in a healthcare setting to five select professional groups: physicians, optometrists, dentists, chiropractors, and psychologists (with PhDs). Excluded are clinicians with doctoral degrees in audiology, speech-language pathology, pharmacy, nursing, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. This legislation will probably be law by the time this editorial is in print. There are several important lessons for audiologists to learn from these events.

Politics Rule—Not Logic or Fair Play. The word "doctor" comes from the Latin *doctus*, the past participle of *docere*, which means "to teach." The origin of this word has nothing to do with medicine or healthcare. The title of doctor was granted by universities for academic degrees as early as the 12th century, long before it was granted for professional degrees. It is interesting to note that "in America as late as the eighteenth century physicians used only the title Mister" (Haggard, 1934, p. 156). Thus, the PhD has a greater historical claim to the title of doctor than those with professional doctorates.

The AuD May Help, But . . . There was no consistency in the type of degree that was permitted to use the title. Four of the approved professions have professional degrees but the psychologists have PhDs. Pharmacists were excluded and they typically have a professional doctorate (PharmD). Although a professional doctorate may have helped audiologists in this situation, we should not expect it to solve every problem.

Know Your Friends and Your Enemies. The Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA) has

worked to amend the legislation to exempt all people with doctoral degrees from an approved university. The psychologists were the only professional group among the privileged five to support this amendment. The other groups either remained "neutral" or actively opposed the amendment. The otolaryngologists did not rush to the support of the audiologists.

Titles Are Important. At least the provincial government and a number of professional groups feel that way, considering the effort and expense that has been expended to restrict or expand the use of the title. The hidden issue is really one of autonomy. A "doctor" is considered a professional with the right to practice independently of supervision and to bill for services. Clearly, some professional groups do not want to share that right with audiologists and speech-language pathologists.

Numbers Are Important. According to an official at OSLA, one problem has been the small number of PhD audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the province. Thus, there is not a large political constituency negatively affected by this legislation. Numbers are important to politicians. Before doing battle in the political arena, audiologists in the United States should carefully consider the value of affiliation with 47,000 speech-language pathologists.

Be Vigilant. While the situation in Ontario is unique now, it may be an omen of things to come. With the changes in the healthcare environment, some professions will want to expand authority (or restrict titles) as a way to protect prestige and income. We must watch for threats to the professional status of audiologists and for attempts to bring audiologists under the direct supervision and control of other health care providers.

Robert G. Turner
Editor

Reference

Haggard, H. W. (1934). *The doctor in history*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.