

**Title**

Service delivery and management of language disorders in Croatia – common practice and key issues

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Croatia is a country faced with obvious lack of speech and language pathologists as regards to all sectors: preschool, school, clinical and private (the ratio being around 1:7000; Croatian Logopedics Association (CLA), 2014). This extremely low ratio of SLPs to inhabitants on one hand, and a considerable growth of waiting lists for diagnosis and therapy of language disorder on the other, highlights the need for adopting more cost-effective strategies of service delivery.

Children with language disorders are usually recognised in the late preschool period, but recently focus has been shifted towards early recognition of group of children referred to as late talkers. Sessions are mostly performed directly by SLTs once a week and sometimes indirectly by parents or caregivers who are advised by practitioners. Cultural context also seems to play a significant role, as not all the children have equal opportunities for adequate intervention (i.e., bilingual children or children from rural areas). The most significant problem from our perspective is a considerable lack of evidence based practice – service deliveries are not always guided by theoretical implications and it seems that SLTs are not acquainted with them in a proper way. It follows that intervention approaches and session planning vary considerably across sectors and among individuals, which means that there is a serious need for more common grounds based on real evidence.