

The second meeting of the Pathways Society was held during the AAA convention on March 31, 2005. There was an excellent turnout...approximately 60 people in attendance. Frank Musiek again reiterated the purpose of these meetings: to have an informal, apolitical, interactive meeting among those interested in areas of auditory processing.

The initial discussion centered on the use of electrophysiology as part of an auditory processing evaluation. The use of tests such as the ABR, MLR, and P300 was discussed. The general consensus was that whatever tests you do, it is important to keep good science behind what you are doing.

Frank then asked the question "Why aren't more audiologists doing auditory processing evaluations?" Most felt it was due to the poor reimbursement rates for this testing. Bob Fifer explained the new CPT codes for auditory processing. He also explained that currently ours is valued as 'non-physician' work, and we are not part of a special money pool in the Medicaid system. Work is being done to have audiologists part of this 'special pool;' which would allow for a significantly higher reimbursement rate for our codes.

A fascinating discussion took place regarding adult clients needing amplification who exhibit binaural interference. Is it better to fit the better ear only, since also amplifying the poorer ear (regarding speech understanding) may lead to reduced speech understanding with hearing aids, even though we are now subjecting the 'poorer' ear to auditory deprivation? Use of tests such as Dichotic Digits, and rehabilitative strategies for training the poor ear, such as the Dichotic Interaural Intensity Difference (DIID) training, for hearing aid users was discussed.

The next meeting will be held as part of the ASHA convention in November 2005 in San Diego, CA. Stay tuned for additional information.