

# Aphasia

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**In news-**Recently, Hollywood actor Bruce Willis was diagnosed with a condition called aphasia, which affects a person's ability to speak, write, and understand a language.

## **More information on Aphasia-**

- **Aphasia is a condition that essentially disrupts the brain's filing system – where the people affected aren't able to find the words they want to say, miss out words in their sentences,** or even come up with incorrect words, resulting in them speaking gibberish.
- Since the filing system is muddled, they also have **difficulty in understanding others.**
- Language and speech are two different things. If the damage is to the language centre of the brain, it presents difficulty in understanding or being able to find the right words.
- **But aphasia can also be caused by loss of motor function, where one knows exactly what they want to say but the brain does not give command to,** so they are unable to say it.
- The **condition is brought on by damage to the brain from a stroke, head injury, or a tumor,** with **stroke** being the most common cause in India.
- Aphasia can **persist as a disability in 21 percent to 38 percent of stroke survivors,** with around 43 new cases being reported each year per 100,000 population.
- There are around two million people in India living with the condition.
- Anyone who has diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, who smokes – all the risk factors for stroke would also be at a higher risk of developing aphasia as a result.
- **Depending on how the brain is affected and the pattern of impediments, aphasia can be categorised into three**

## **groups.**

- One, **expressive aphasia**, where the patient can understand others better than they can speak. People with this pattern of the condition **struggle to get the words out and often use short phrases such as 'want food'**.
- Two, **comprehensive aphasia**, where the patient **might speak in fluent complex sentences, but end up using unrecognizable words, incorrect words,** or unnecessary words making it difficult for others to understand them. The patients, however, don't realize that others cannot understand them.
- Three, **global aphasia**, which results in poor understanding as well as difficulty forming words and sentences.
- **At present, the only treatment available is speech and language therapy,** where therapists retrain the brain to sort out the filing system.