

Marie-Christine Franken, who boasts both clinical and research credentials, has conducted clinical research in stuttering at Nijmegen University Medical Centre as well as Erasmus University Medical Centre in Rotterdam (see <http://www.erasmusmc.nl/47424/2275788/MCFranken> ). She focuses on treatment outcomes research; if determining the cause of stuttering is “hard”, then evaluating effective methods for treating it is certainly the “hardest” science.

Our nomination criteria include:

- Her work over 35 years to seamlessly bridge basic research in stuttering and clinical applications, resulting in world-wide impact
- Her outstanding research and clinical leadership with many international collaborators and numerous PhD students
- Her outstanding commitment to professional service such as editorial boards (e.g. JFD), various committees, and outreach programs on all levels
- Her many publications in prestigious journals both in and outside of the field, thus increasing awareness of stuttering all over
- We find over 4000 hits on Google Scholar searching for ‘Marie Christine Franken’ - from which over 1000 alone on ‘RESTART stuttering’; also many scholarly citations of her work, an impressive record for someone at her career stage
- Her landmark RESTART program has significantly impacted the field and all people involved. This work compares the effectiveness of two major forms of intervention for early stuttering and has become a classic in the field. The results of this large-scale, multi-site project indicate that two well-established and widely used therapy approaches for early stuttering are equally effective
- This is a major finding for two reasons. First, it establishes the power of early intervention for stuttering on a scale, unavailable so far. Second, it enables well-guided choice of therapy options for families and therapists, thus ensuring a better outcome for any child who stutters
- We received too many laudatory endorsements from major figures in our field to fully include here, but, as Walt Manning writes, (she has generated) “essential understanding concerning the factors that result in successful therapy for young children who stutter.” Elaine Kelman notes that the field should be “grateful” for her “seminal research” and for “enhancing our understanding of how best to manage early childhood stuttering”, and her development of a “robust evidence base”. Jeanna Riley says her work “sets the standard”, is “meticulous” and “exemplary.” Scott Yaruss writes that her research, “will absolutely rate as one of the most impactful ... She has made an actuality of a task that others have only speculated about (to create) “findings that the field desperately needs... she deserves every accolade the field can bestow”.
- Rather than promoting individual or partisan agendas, as all letter-writers note, she gracefully, even-handedly and tirelessly strives to discover multiple, evidence-based approaches to stuttering treatment
- Currently, she is doing basic neurogenetic studies (together with the Max Planck Institute of Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen) on the well described population of the RESTART study. That may open new avenues as to fundamental and prognostic aspects in childhood stuttering.
- IFA Award recognition will encourage and empower her work to understand the immense value of her contributions, not only to date but particularly those yet to come.