



Oral Function Training as Intervention for Dysphagia in an Elderly Nursing Home Resident with Infarct Dementia: A Case Study

Hsin-Ju Yang¹、Ya-Hui Wang²、Kui-Chen Huang³

^{1,3}RN, MSN, Tsaotun Psychiatric Center, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan

²Head Nurse, Tsaotun Psychiatric Center, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan

• Objective

Dysphagia is a common occurrence in the elderly during the process of aging. Oral function training that has been reported to improve masticatory muscle strength helps prevent and postpone the occurrence of dysphagia among the elderly. The study aimed at assessing the efficacy of before-meal oral function training as an intervention for dysphagia in a 77-year-old female nursing home resident.

• Intervention

The case study focused on an elderly female nursing home resident with infarct dementia experiencing three previous episodes of partial dysphagia. The patient received a 12-week oral function training lasting from January 7 to April 1, 2021. Neck, facial, cheek, and tongue muscle-strengthening exercises, swallowing exercise, speech exercise, and salivary gland massage were performed 10 minutes prior to the three daily meals. EAT-10 (Eating Assessment Tool) was used for clinical record and efficacy evaluation.

• Results

Results of the intervention indicated that, after the 12-week oral function training, the EAT-10 score of the patient went down from 19 to 15 points with improvement observed in swallowing liquids and solids and experiencing coughing while eating. In addition, there was no episode of dysphagia during the entire course of the intervention.

• Conclusions

Oral function training proves to be an effective intervention helping patients improve their oral functions, reduce risks of dysphagia, coughing, and aspiration pneumonia, thereby enhancing both physical and mental wellbeing.

• Relevance to HPH

For healthcare providers, implementing oral function training is able to help elderly patients with dysphagia to enjoy the pleasure of eating, postpone decline in oral functions, reduce frequency of coughing while eating, and lower the risk of aspiration pneumonia, thus improving overall health and quality of life, as well as saving healthcare cost.

Keywords: oral function training、Elderly Nursing Home、Dysphagia、Infarct Dementia