

Cases J 1:67, 2008.

Cross-system effects of dysphagia treatment on dysphonia: a case report

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Abstract

Traditionally, treatment of dysphagia and dysphonia has followed a specificity approach whereby treatment plans have focused on each dysfunction individually. Recently however, a therapeutic cross-system effect has been proposed between these two dysfunctions. At least one study has demonstrated swallowing improvement in subjects who completed a dysphonia treatment program. However, we are unaware of any evidence demonstrating the converse effect. In this paper, we present a case-report of a 74 year old male who demonstrated improvement in selected vocal parameters after completion of a dysphagia therapy program. Dysphagia therapy resulted in improved laryngeal function in this subject. Results implicate improved vocal fold tension with increased glottal closure. Further investigation into the potential for this cross-system effect is warranted.