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1

Perspectives on Head & Neck Cancer Patient Care During the Pandemic

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2

Disclosures

- Jeff Searl has no relevant financial or non-financial disclosures.
- Philip C. Doyle has no relevant financial or non-financial disclosures.
- Ann Kearney has ...

3

Agenda

Introduction of Presenters and Topic – Searl	5 min
Early Impact of Pandemic from SLP Perspective – Doyle	20 min
Laryngectomy Patient Perspective – Searl	20 min
On the Ground Perspective & Case Presentations – Kearney	30 min
Q & A	15 min

4

Introductions



5

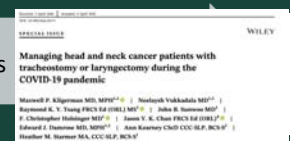
Background

Origin of
 Two Studies

- SLP perspective
- Laryngectomee Perspective

Professional
 Guidance

- ASHA
- Others



6

Rationale for this project

- March 2020 - declaration of a world-wide pandemic secondary to COVID-19
- Health care systems were preparing for “the worst” relative to hospital admissions
- Transmission of the virus was emerging, but fully unknown, yet it was clearly recognized as being highly contagious
- Increasing awareness of virus being transmitted via aerosolization
- Given increased knowledge on spread, SLPs anticipated direct implications on practice

7

Impact on SLP practice

- Of particular importance to those working with upper airway disorders
- High probability of contact exposure relative to those working with voice disorders and head and neck cancers
- A rapidly changing and dynamic response by clinicians and institutions and employers
- Preliminary institutional guidelines were emerging
- Recognition of COVID-19 as highly contagious within a high exposure work setting
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) – availability and access

8

Objectives of Clinician Survey

To gather initial information and provide a “baseline” relative to the pandemic

This included considerations related to several broad areas:

- COVID-19 related precautions
- Modifications in clinical practice (e.g., endoscopy and postlaryngectomy care)
- SLP Health and COVID-19 testing (e.g., availability and access to PPE)
- Work setting impact
- Financial impact

9

Data Acquisition

- Survey prepared in Qualtrics
- Broad solicitation of potential SLP participants
- Data gathered over a 17-day period - May 19 to June 5, 2020

10

Findings from Survey

• COVID-19 related precautions

- > half believed they had been directly exposed to COVID-19 and 12% had contracted the virus.
- Of the 23% of SLPs who reported they were tested, 6% indicated a positive test result.
- Antibody testing was reported by 12%, and of these, 13% had a positive antibody test.

• Changes in Practice

- % of SLPs completing the most endoscopic procedures pre-pandemic (>10/week) was reduced from 39% to 3% during the pandemic.
- SLPs completing the most TEP voice prosthesis changes (>5/week) reported a reduction in frequency from 24% to 6%.
- 90% of respondents reported that some guidelines for practice had been provided by their employer.

11

Findings, continued

• SLP Health and COVID-19 testing (e.g., availability and access to PPE)

- A variety of PPE was used by 92% of respondents, however, re-use was common. Only 8% reported changing a mask between patients and 49% changed a mask daily.
- Re-use of PPE was not uncommon.

• Work setting impact

- With exception of VA hospitals and relative to work setting, 45 to 75% of respondents indicated some level of financial impact secondary to the pandemic.
- As a group, 47% of respondents (312 of 665) indicated they had experienced a financial impact. Across work setting, impacts ranged from 8% (VA hospitals) to 75% (Home Health settings).

• Financial impact

- Overall, 9% of SLPs reported being furloughed or laid off.

12

The Laryngectomy Patients Experience During the Pandemic

AIMS:

1. Describe clinical experiences of laryngectomees during pandemic
2. Identify changes in HME use, stoma coverage, alaryngeal communication patients were advised to make or made on their own

13

Rationale: Laryngectomee's risk and experiences likely altered

Increased risk of serious complications from COVID-19

14

Also: SLP Risk in Caring for Laryngectomees during Pandemic → altered procedures

15

Methods

- Participants**
 - >18 yrs old
 - Total laryngectomy
- Survey**
 - Study specific
 - Iterative-development with external validation
 - Clinical experiences, professional advice, changes made
- Distribution**
 - Social media (primarily relevant FB pages)
 - Professional and patient contacts
 - Vendors
 - July 5 – Aug 10, 2020
- Analysis**
 - Descriptive statistics
 - Content analysis of responses to open-ended questions

16

Who Responded?

- N = 212 → after exclusions N = 173 for analysis
- 65% Male
- 88% White
- 92% Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin

Communication Method	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)
Electrolarynx	25%	23%
Esophageal Speech	9%	7%
TE speech	57%	2%
Pneumatic AL	1%	1%
AAC	6%	15%
Other/none	3%	5%
"No secondary"	--	46%

17

Appointments Since March 1, 2020

Parameter	Percent
At least 1 SLP appt	42%
Appt for "Routine Care"	90% (mostly TEP changes)
SLP canceled	19% (early on, non-emergency appts)
Patient canceled	13% (COVID-19 concerns)
SLP contacted Patient	54% 1 or more
	43% none
Reason for SLP contact	72% routine
	24% COVID-19 related
	14% other

18



25