The Role of Speech Language Pathologists in the Management of Swallowing and Voice Complications Resulting from Zenker's Diverticulum

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Abstract

Introduction: Zenker's diverticulum (ZD) is an alimentary tract pouch localized in the area of the upper esophageal sphincter and it's one of esophageal diverticula types that are considered as a health problem that cause serious complications. Speech-Language pathologists (SLP) involved in the management of patients with ZD provide services that include evaluation, diagnosis, and rehabilitation. **Objective**: To highlight the new trends on diagnosis and treatment, the voice and swallowing disorders that related to Zenker's diverticulum and reviewing the international experience on it. **Methods**: The literature review was based on papers published on books, journal articles, and they are between 1973 and 2019, crossing the following headings: Zenker's diverticulum, esophageal diverticula, Speech-language Pathologist (SLP), swallowing disorders, voice disorders and rehabilitation. **Results**: Various factors are involved in Zenker's diverticulum; the most important are being the clinical signs such as dysphagia, regurgitation, voice disorders and chest pain, heartburn, cough, asthma, hoarseness and throat clearing. Zenker's diverticulum diagnosis must be based on the anamnesis and the symptoms must be evaluated in terms of duration, intensity, frequency, triggering and relief factors, pattern of evolution and impact on the patient's quality of life. The diagnosis requires confirmation with different exams. **Conclusion**: Significant improvement in the swallowing and voice disorders of appropriately selected patients can be obtained in a rehabilitation program with properly trained and experienced speech-language pathologists. Treatment options for voice disorders and dysphagia are critical and varied, options should