Dysphagia Treatment in the Rehabilitation Setting

Inpatient rehabilitation - whether intensive, subacute, or skilled nursing – can provide an opportune setting for dysphagia treatment. In this session, we will follow a patient through his rehabilitation journey, beginning with discharge from acute care through his transition home. We will focus on a complex case with the challenges of a recent tracheotomy, vocal fold immobility, COPD, history of supraglottic squamous cell carcinoma status post radiation, and as you might have guessed, severe dysphagia. With an evidence-based lens, we will plan treatment, set goals, and measure outcomes. Barriers and opportunities specific to the inpatient rehabilitation setting will be considered, as well as the SLP’s role within the interdisciplinary treatment team.

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Mary Nader, SLPD, CCC-SLP is a speech-language pathologist with the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. She practices across settings of rehabilitation, long-term care, acute care, hospice, and outpatient. She completed her clinical doctorate in speech-language pathology at the MGH Institute of Health Professions in 2023. Specific areas of interest include dysphagia, aphasia, surgical airway management, clinical mentorship, and applications of technology.

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Learning Objectives:
- Identify positive and negative prognostic factors for dysphagia treatment within the rehabilitation setting.
- List at least 3 feasible swallowing treatment options for patients within this setting.
- Describe considerations for complex dysphagia patients when discharging home.

Agenda:
Introduction to clinical case – 15 minutes
Treatment planning and goal setting – 15 minutes
Measuring progress and making adjustments – 10 minutes
Rehabilitation-specific considerations – 10 minutes
Transition from rehabilitation to discharge home – 5 minutes
Summary and Take-Aways – 5 minutes