



Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Health Care Providers in Oncology Wards About Dysphagia

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Abstract

Dysphagia is a prevalent swallowing dysfunction in cancer patients. Due to its life-threatening complications, early diagnosis and management are essential. Improving the knowledge (K) and attitude (A) of the medical staff potentially affects their practice (P). Conducting KAP studies is one way to find gaps in delivering patient care. This study aimed to investigate the KAP of healthcare providers working with cancer patients to find the gaps and create a basis for educational policies to improve the quality of care in the future. This is a cross-sectional study in which 147 healthcare providers in the oncology wards were enrolled. KAP of the participants was assessed by a validated and reliable researcher-made questionnaire. The mean score of knowledge was 14.95 ± 2.41 out of 38. A few participants (2.7%) were able to recognize all the symptoms of dysphagia. Half of the participants wrote their recommendations to the patients. The most prevalent recommendations were using soft and pureed food (65.4%) and decreasing the volume of the food (34.6%). There was a positive correlation between the score of the knowledge and mentioning the symptoms for diagnosis (p -value = 0.007) and intervention recommendations (p -value = 0.019). The participants' knowledge was very limited. They relied only on obvious symptoms of dysphagia instead of relying on a multidimensional point of view on diagnosis. Improving knowledge through hands-on courses with a multidisciplinary point of view is recommended to improve the quality of care for patients.

Keywords Dysphagia · Cancer · Knowledge · Attitude · Practice · Deglutition

Introduction

The swallowing process is very complex. It includes different voluntary and involuntary phases that require coordination of the muscles of the mouth, throat, larynx, and esophagus; also, several centers in the nervous system, such as the brainstem

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Table 4 (continued)

Knowledge	I-CVI	Kappa statistics
11. If your answer to questions 9 and 10 is yes, answer the following question	1	1
12. Which of the following can help patients with swallowing disorders?	0.8	0.7629
a Health policymakers		
b Industries		
c Ordinary people in society		
13. If you think any of the factors in question 12 can play an effective role, write how they can play this role?	0.8	0.7629
a Health policymakers		
b Industries		
c Ordinary people in society		
practice		
1. How did you diagnose the patient's swallowing disorder?	1	1
2. What questions do you ask the patient or his/her family to diagnose swallowing disorder?	1	1
3. Are you familiar with the instrumental methods for diagnosing and evaluating swallowing disorders?	1	1
a Yes		
b No		
4. If you are familiar with the instrumental methods of diagnosing swallowing disorders, please name them?	1	1
5. If your patient has had a swallowing disorder, list his or her symptoms	1	1
6. What advice or action have you taken to manage the swallowing problem of your patient? (Please indicate the symptoms of the patient and the advice or action which you prescribe for the patient)	1	1
7. Have you ever referred the patient to other specialists to solve the swallowing problem?	1	1
8. If the answer to question 7 is yes. What specialties have you referred to?	1	1
9. Have you ever searched for information about your patient's swallowing disorder in information sources such as books or the Internet?	1	1
10. Was surfing the resources enough to solve your problem or eliminate your need to ask questions from experts in this field?	1	1
11. Do you feel the need to participate in a workshop in the field of diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of swallowing disorders?	1	1

Table 5 The number of course about dysphagia which participants passed during their university study

Number of courses passed	Frequency	Frequency percentage	Relative frequency percentage	Cumulative frequency percentage
2	9	6.1	17.3	17.3
3	18	12.4	34.6	51.9
4	18	12.4	34.6	86.5
5	1	0.7	1.9	88.5
6	2	1.4	3.8	92.3
10	3	2	5.8	98.1
30	1	0.7	1.9	100
Unknown	93	64.1	-	-

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Data Availability The data will be available on reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethics Approval This study was approved with the ethics code of IR.SUMS.MEDREC.1399.220. All the participants signed the consent form.

Consent to Participate N/A.

Consent for Publication N/A.

Conflict of Interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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