

Transcutaneous electrical stimulation versus traditional dysphagia therapy: A nonconcurrent cohort study.

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Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this investigation was to critically evaluate the efficacy of electrical stimulation (ES) in treating persons with dysphagia and aspiration.

Study Design: Nonconcurrent cohort study.

Methods: The charts of 40 consecutive individuals undergoing ES and 40 consecutive persons undergoing traditional dysphagia therapy (TDT) were reviewed. Pre- and post-therapy treatment success was compared utilizing a previously described swallow severity scale. A linear regression analysis was employed to adjust for potential confounding variables.

Results: The swallow severity scale improved from 0.50 to 1.48 in the TDT group ($P < 0.05$) and from 0.28 to 3.23 in the ES group ($P < 0.001$). After adjusting for potential confounding factors, persons receiving ES did significantly better in regard to improvement in their swallowing function than persons receiving TDT ($P = 0.003$).

Conclusions: The results of this nonconcurrent cohort study suggest that dysphagia therapy with transcutaneous electrical stimulation is superior to traditional dysphagia therapy alone in individuals in a long-term acute care facility.