

## THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH HEAD AND NECK SOCIETY

**Title:** "He seemed to come alive" - patient experience of joining a laryngectomy choir

**Body:** Background: Total laryngectomy leads to significant changes to breathing, communication and swallowing. These changes may have a profound impact on a person's social life, self-esteem and psychological well-being. There is growing evidence that singing interventions may lead to improved vocal function in people with laryngectomy. Our Speech and Language Therapy team has recently piloted a choir for people following laryngectomy as an adjunct to the current communication rehabilitation service, in conjunction with professional singers and a choir director.

**Methods:** This was a qualitative study comprising of an unstructured interview with three participants (two people post-laryngectomy with surgical voice restoration and one spouse) on their experience of participating in a choir. Thematic analysis was completed on the data.

**Results:** The analysis revealed six themes. These included: (i) peer support, (ii) post-traumatic growth, (iii) overcoming communication barriers, (iv) sense of accountability to the group, (v) exploring the new voice, (vi) embracing the new voice.

**Conclusions:** This study indicates that group singing may offer multiple psychological and quality-of-life benefits to people with laryngectomy who use tracheoesophageal voice. Inclusion of people who use other communication methods (oesophageal and electrolaryngeal speech) in future research is warranted.

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