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Title: Insights from a Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) service for Benign Head & Neck/Upper airway disorders: A 1 year review.

Body: Background

The Voice & Swallowing Clinic at the Mater Hospital provides an OPD service to adults with voice, swallowing and upper airway related disorders referred from consultant clinics. A service review was carried out to evaluate the patient cohort and to examine the SLT use of instrumental assessment.

Objective

The aim is to describe the demographic and clinical profile of patients accessing the service, and quantify the SLT utilisation of videonasendoscopy in patient management.

Methods

A retrospective review of patients referred in 2024 was undertaken. An electronic database and SLT reports were analysed.

Results

168 patients were referred in 2024 (n=49 male, n=123 female). The median age of the cohort was 60 (18-88). Referrals were highest for dysphonia (82%) followed by Swallow (5%) and Cough (5%). There is high utilisation of SLT videonasendoscopy (n=132). Most common videonasendoscopy findings were: Muscle Tension dysphonia (25%); Presbyphonia/bowed vocal cords (22%); Vocal cord palsy (18%).

Conclusion:

The largest cohort of service users are females with muscle tension, closely followed by presbyphonia. SLT's use videonasendoscopy extensively in the clinic. Further study should examine the impact of laryngeal presentation on disability in the older cohort, and the contribution of videonasendoscopy to patient management.

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