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Title: Outcomes from a novel pathway between community Flexible Endoscopy Evaluation of Swallowing (cFEES) and acute Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) services.

Body: BACKGROUND:

FEES is a gold standard diagnostic instrument used mainly by speech and language therapists (SLTs) in dysphagia management. cFEES is a novel service model, first implemented in Ireland in 2022. cFEES requires an integrated multidisciplinary (MDT) approach. This work describes collaboration between community SLT and acute services to develop Ireland's first cFEES-Acute ENT pathway.

METHODS: The MDT developed the cFEES-Acute ENT Pathway aimed at enhancing quality and promoting collaboration. Key steps included: standardised referral process, joint review of videos/images, effective communication/decision-making and rapid access to ENT outpatient assessment. Demographic, clinical and process data were recorded for 12 months, and descriptive analyses were conducted.

RESULTS: Of 146 cFEES completed, 18.3% (N=26) were triaged to the cFEES-ENT pathway. Mean age was 73 (SD=11), with stroke and Parkinson's Disease being the most common conditions (each N=6). 50% were female. 61.5% (N=16) required outpatient ENT appointments. 13 attended, with a mean waiting time of eight weeks. Of those, 8 (61.5%) were discharged following initial ENT assessment.

CONCLUSION: This integrated pathway demonstrates improvements in quality and efficiency of care delivered, as well as clinician engagement and collaboration.

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