Instrumental Assessment of Swallowing – beyond FEES and the MBSS

A Look at Swallow Testing from an Interdisciplinary Perspective

“...call it the law of the instrument, and it may be formulated as follows: Give a small boy a hammer, and he will find that everything he encounters needs pounding...”


In other words...

• *If the only tool you have is a hammer, all your problems tend to look like nails!*

...what is the SLP’s hammer of choice?

• Clinical Evaluation

• Modified Barium Swallow Study

• Flexible Endoscopic Examination of Swallowing
GI tract
“Remember, it’s all just one big tube!” – Dr. Robert Johnston

Our Scope of Practice

- Of course, we can not perform testing outside our scope.
- Our world is the MBSS, FEES/FEEST, and Clinical Swallowing Assessments.
- We SHOULD consult an interdisciplinary basis and be able to make rational referrals as needed.
- We can and should be versed in other testing so we can act as a referral point to the APPROPRIATE testing practitioner.

What Other Tests Can Medical Professionals Use to Assess the Swallow?

- Upper GI Series
- Barium Swallow Study (Esophagram) with and without air, with and without GERD testing
- 24 Hour PH testing/manometry
- EGD (Esophagogastroduodenoscopy)
- Transnasal Esophageal visualization

WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN DISORDERS OF THE ESOPHAGUS AND GI TRACT?

- Remember, ASHA and Division 13 recommend that EVERY MBSS include an esophageal screening.
- We are only identifying a dysfunction and should describe the events we see in FUNCTIONAL terms only.
- For example, reflux is described as “retrograde movement of the bolus”.
Upper GI Series

- An upper gastrointestinal series is an x-ray test used to define the anatomy of the upper digestive tract.
- An upper gastrointestinal series involves filling the esophagus, stomach, and small intestines with a white liquid material (barium).
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiYEy2Rzs7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiYEy2Rzs7s)

Upper GI Series (continued)

- Demonstration of maneuvers for Upper GI Study
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGokGLO84W4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGokGLO84W4)

Barium Swallow (Esophagram)

- An esophagram (outside of a Upper GI Series) is an inspection of just the esophagus. The test can be conducted alone or as a part of a series of tests carried out on the upper and the middle regions of the GI tract. This test is performed using fluoroscopy, barium, and x-rays.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-I3IDjGvcs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-I3IDjGvcs)

24 hour PH testing/Manometry

- Two separate tests usually performed around the same time (but can be performed separately) to help with the assessment and diagnosis of reflux disease.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9BrhCCuD5g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9BrhCCuD5g)
EGD (Esophagogastroduodenoscopy) -say that 10 times fast-

• Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) is a test to examine the lining of the esophagus (the tube that connects your throat to your stomach), stomach, and first part of the small intestine. It is done with a small camera (flexible endoscope) that is inserted down the throat.

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvudWuvMjtA

A Few Examples of Disorders We Will Encounter

• Reflux disease/GERD

• Strictures of the Esophagus

• Achalasia

• Esophageal Diverticulum

• Cricopharyngeal Dysfunction (secondary to Reflux or Hystericus) – I’ve got a lump in my throat

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS