SWALLOWING RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE AND EMST IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

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**Introduction:** Dysphagia can be devastating to quality of life and can result in physiological changes leading to life-threatening conditions like aspiration pneumonia, malnutrition, and dehydration. Swallowing related quality of life secondary following dysphagia treatment is of clinical and research significance; as it can inform treatment planning and development of treatment modalities.

**Aims:** To examine swallowing related quality of life in person's with Parkinson's disease following four weeks of expiratory muscle strength training (EMST).

**Methods:** Ninety participants with moderate PD and history of dysphagia were enrolled in the current study. Pre/post intervention arm, participants’ swallowing was evaluated using functional, physiological, and quality of life (QOL) measures. QOL was measured using the SWAL-QOL survey. Participants were randomly assigned to four weeks of active treatment (EMST), a sham treatment (placebo device), or no intervention.

**Results:** Participants in both the active and sham treatment groups demonstrated improvements in quality of life pre to post training. Participants in the control group did not. Only the active treatment group demonstrated improvements in functional and physiological measures of swallowing pre to post training.

**Conclusions:** It is essential that quality of life be measured in association with experimental treatment paradigms to assess any possible worsening of burden with treatment. It appears that EMST serves to improve quality of life, but a placebo effect was identified in the sham group. This effect should be further studied as it could signal a limitation in the SWAL-QOL as an instrument for assessing change in swallowing-related quality of life secondary to treatment.