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12 months of the RCSLT/NIHR Dysphagia Research Priorities

Hazel Warren

Hazel undertook a service evaluation exploring patient and staff perceptions of using computers to provide biofeedback in intensive dysphagia therapy. This was a single case-study with one patient and the team around them (the patient, his wife, a speech and language therapist and a therapy assistant) with semi structured interviews. Data were analysed with thematic analysis, which resulted in recommendations for service and future practice in the setting.



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Rachael Kasch

Rachael is doing a project entitled: *“What are the experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities and dysphagia? An exploratory study”*. The research has led to a number of changes in clinical practice, including:

- Now offering to eat lunch with patients
- Considering impact of ‘cutting up food’ recommendations on emotional well-being and looking at how service user independence can be increased
- Providing advice on eating out socially with dysphagia



Find out more: www.rcslt.org

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Anna Robinson

Anna's MRes research study was exploring the experiences of family members living with a loved one with post stroke dysphagia. Within the findings, themes came out around several of the adult dysphagia priorities (4) and (7).

The findings may give some insight into family members awareness of swallowing problems and their views on decision making, and may impact on how a 'living with dysphagia' community group is run.



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Gemma Clunie

Gemma is doing research asking: *'What are the changes in voice and swallowing outcomes of adults with airway stenosis pre- and post- reconstructive airway surgery?'*

Gemma will measure outcomes pre-surgery, 2 weeks and 6 months post-surgery, including evaluating the Reflux Symptom Index (addressing several priorities!). The project was partly designed by patients and will hopefully gives clinicians confidence in their clinical practice with patients who have airway stenosis with to swallowing and voice problems



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Sabrina Eltringham

Sabrina is researching: 'How does variation in assessment and management of dysphagia in acute stroke affect the development of stroke-associated pneumonia?'

The aims are to find out how dysphagia assessment and management in the first 72 hours affect the risk of stroke-associated pneumonia; and to find out what care processes and interventions systemic to patients with dysphagia affect the risk of developing stroke-associated pneumonia during the acute phase.



Find out more: www.rcslt.org

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James Faraday

James is running a project looking at a training intervention for care home staff to improve mealtimes for people with dementia. The aim is to develop the training package, test it in care home settings and see if it is acceptable.

The hope is that this will result in better mealtimes for people with dementia – safer, and more enjoyable. In time, the work will help clinicians provide effective and sustainable training to care staff working with people with dementia.



Find out more: www.rcslt.org
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Joanne Patterson

Joanne is supervising a number of studies that fit the RCSLT research priorities for dysphagia:

- MSc project: fluid intake and thickened drinks in older frail patients.
- PhD project: pulmonary fibrosis and dysphagia- using instrumental assessments (VF and FEES) and patient recorded outcomes.
- NIHR internship project: expiratory muscle strength with head and neck cancer patients with structured standardised outcome measure.
- A project on evaluating the patient experience after running workshops with Ryan Riley from Life Kitchen
- Development of a carer questionnaire for head and neck cancer patients with dysphagia.



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Diane Sellars

Diane is involved in a range of studies:

1. The FEEDS review which aims to find out about the services currently offered to families of children with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties by NHS services.
2. A project building on the Eating and Drinking Ability Classification System (EDCAS) for people with cerebral palsy, by developing the mini-EDCAS, suitable for use with children aged 18-36 months.
3. The G-PATH psychological support study considering how different neurodisability services meet the psychosocial support needs of children/young people with feeding disabilities and their families.



Find out more: www.rcslt.org
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Lisa Everton

Lisa is analysing Videofluoroscopy Swallowing Studies in acute stroke patients. The main aim is to assess how sensitive outcomes are in detecting change in swallowing function post- intervention. It will also look at correlations between disordered swallowing features and severity of aspiration.

The study highlights the important area of outcome measurement in dysphagia and helps improve our understanding of disordered swallowing, ultimately resulting in better outcomes for adults with dysphagia.



Find out more: www.rcslt.org

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Bernadette Clifford

Bernadette ran a project which helped to develop The Lung Group, which aims to improve the respiratory health of people with learning disabilities and vulnerable respiratory health. The active cycle of breathing technique was adapted to be accessible. The clinical implications have been:

- Improved recognition of the effectiveness of joint working between physiotherapy and speech and language therapy.
- Enabled people with learning disabilities, who did not find existing respiratory health groups accessible, to access the active cycle of breathing technique .



Find out more: www.rcslt.org

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Sally Morgan

Sally's research has looked at a few of the research priorities. One project found that healthcare professionals' reported that gastrostomy feeding improved health and wellbeing for children & parents, and has also worked on a review looking at this area in relation to blended tube feeds (Breaks et al. 2019). With colleagues, Sally has contributed to other projects including looking at the use of mealtime mats in clinical practice in special schools, and parent adherence to dysphagia management guidelines.



Find out more: www.rcslt.org
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