E-Poster

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Speech Therapy for Supra-Gastric Belching: A Case Report

Topic: Exercise

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BACKGROUND

Supra-gastric belching (SGB) is a functional disorder characterized by the rapid intake and expulsion of air, often leading to significant social and physical discomfort. While behavioral therapy, particularly orofacial exercises and relaxation techniques, has been suggested as a potential treatment, its effectiveness remains underexplored. This case report presents a retrospective analysis of a patient with persistent SGB who demonstrated improvement following a structured therapy regimen incorporating orofacial exercises, shoulder and neck relaxation exercises, and the Accent method.

CASE DESCRIPTION

A 56-year-old male presented with a two-year history of frequent belching, which predominantly occurred when he was alone or using the restroom, significantly impacting his daily life. Gastrointestinal evaluations, including endoscopy, esophageal manometry, and 24-hour pH-impedance monitoring, revealed gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and SGB. Previous pharmacological treatments, including proton pump inhibitors and prokinetics, provided minimal symptom relief.

The patient was referred for therapy, which focused on:

- Cognitive awareness training to identify and control belching patterns
- Orofacial exercises to improve oral muscle coordination
- Shoulder and neck relaxation exercises to reduce tension-related aerophagia
- The Accent method regulates airflow and improves breath control

DISCUSSION

After 12 therapy sessions over two months, the patient reported significantly reduced belching frequency. Subjective symptom assessments also showed notable improvement:

- Self-rated belching severity and daily impact score decreased from 562 to 73
- GERD questionnaire score improved from 11 to 6
- Reflux symptom index (RSI) score dropped from 10 to 2
- Esophageal hypervigilance and anxiety scale (EHAS) score reduced from 34 to 14

These findings align with previous studies suggesting that structured orofacial and relaxation exercises can modify maladaptive aerophagia behaviors. This retrospective analysis highlights the potential role of orofacial exercises, shoulder and neck relaxation, and the Accent method as non-invasive and effective approaches for managing SGB, particularly in patients unresponsive to pharmacological treatments.

CONCLUSION

This case report underscores the effectiveness of speech therapy in reducing supra-gastric belching symptoms. Further studies with larger sample sizes are needed to establish standardized treatment protocols.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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