

Dysphagia Management in Head and Neck Cancers: a Manual and Atlas

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Manejo da Disfagia no Câncer de Cabeça e Pescoço: Manual e Atlas

Manejo de la Disfagia en Cánceres de Cabeza y Cuello: Manual y Atlas

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Head and neck cancer (HNC) represents the upper malignant aerodigestive neoplasms and affects males, mostly older than 40 years and associated use of alcohol and tobacco. In Brazil, HNC is the 5th type of cancer most frequent in men and the 13th in women¹.

Deglutition is the process of food passage to the stomach and its dysfunction is called dysphagia². The consensus in the literature is that the patient with HNC has high risk of developing dysphagia because of the compromise of important anatomic regions of the oropharyngeal dynamics³. The multi-professional team can help and support the patient through all treatment stages⁴.

Recently, the publishing house Springer Singapore published the book *Dysphagia Management in Head and Neck Cancers: a Manual and Atlas*⁵ (in Portuguese: “*Manejo da Disfagia nos Cânceres de Cabeça e Pescoço: Manual e Atlas*”) in 2018 with 404 pages and organized by the neck and head surgeons Krishnakumar Thankappan and Subramania Iyer and by the otolaryngologist Jayakumar R. Menon. All of them belong to the Centre for Head and Neck Surgery and Oncology of the Institute of Medical Sciences Amrita, Kochi, in India; in addition, they count with long experience in treating and following up patients with HNC related dysphagia. This book compiles contributions and texts of more than 30 experts in oncology of head and neck, favoring the inter-disciplinary vision of the theme.

The book is organized in six parts with different chapters, compiling the most current references. Each part presents a description, presentation and division of information that are part of its content with a functional resource that does not need (exclusively) to be read from beginning to end because it works as quick glimpse for the management of difficulties encountered during the clinical practice. The book is presented as a manual and atlas offering multimedia resources as images, videos, and photos, studies, and discussions of cases.

Part I consists of two chapters addressing the anatomy of head and neck with tables and detailed information about muscles, innervations, and functions, including full color maps and illustrations. The concepts of normal and altered deglutition are fully presented. The material developed by the authors described the deglutition in its full complexity through biochemical depictions and mental maps of the physiology, anatomy, and neural control of this function. It is clear the author’s concern with the understanding of the bio-mechanic of deglutition attempting to help the reader to reach a correct reasoning of the oncologic treatment alterations. This content is accompanied by easily found visual resources and fast reading for health professionals.

Part II consists of six chapters describing the methods of evaluation of deglutition, beginning with pre-treatment evaluation, and discussing the findings that can be predictive for the prognosis of post-treatment dysphagia. The instrumental (videofluoroscopy, nasofibrolaringoscopy of deglutition, transnasal esophagoscopy, and manometry) and clinical methods are described (clinical evaluation of deglutition); the authors debate how these instruments are applied and highlight some recommendations. The complete information permits the reader to match its evaluation

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methods according to the resources existing in its health service and train the professional to collect the data and description of the functional profile.

The 11 chapters of part III of the book discuss the general principles of management of oral diet and the possibilities of rehabilitation (exercises and compensatory therapies). The chapters are self-explanatory with illustrations, photos and videos of exercises and maneuvers of rehabilitation and tables summarizing these techniques, which facilitates the understanding of the information. Some nutritional considerations are addressed, the use of alternatives feeding routes (feeding probes, gastrostomies, jejunostomies), offering steering principles for easy identification of potential cases that could benefit from these approaches. The authors give high relevance to social and psychological factors and emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach for better impact in the quality of life of the patient. Other more current and controversial themes are addressed as electrostimulation, which enables the reader to develop clinical and critical reasoning through scientific bases.

Part IV of the book addresses oral cavity, oropharynx, larynx and hypopharynx post-surgery dysphagia with videos and images of the results of the instrumental evaluations of the deglutition according to the type of surgery and within the same concept, the different types of therapeutic conducts (exercises, maneuvers, compensations). In addition, the authors investigate the use of reconstruction surgeries of HNC considering esthetic aspects which are crucial for low impact in the quality of life.

After the exclusive treatment with radiotherapy/chemotherapy (no surgery), dysphagia can be present too; this theme is addressed in part V, where the strategies to prevent and rehabilitate the dysphagia associated with radiotherapy are introduced. Different prophylactic exercises based in scientific studies and clinical cases are presented for practical application of the knowledge. The management of other symptoms as mucositis and pain are treated in depth. The material is extremely valuable within a context still poorly studied worldwide and applied in practice.

The book ends with part VI including a summary of the content and suggesting some guiding ideas about the required studies addressing the theme of the present review.

The book *Dysphagia Management in Head and Neck Cancers: a Manual and Atlas*⁵, because of the richness of its content is aimed to all the professionals involved in the management of dysphagia of the patient with HNC. The material is updated and offers practical descriptions that can facilitate the clinical practice with clear language, further to multimedia resources that favor learning. It is a material developed in India, a country with a socioeconomic and health context quite similar to Brazil's, which evidently allows its application to our reality.

The phonoaudiologists and health professionals providing care to this population must have a comprehensive understanding of the different forms of dysphagia in HNC, factors associated to high risk of developing complications and objectives of the patient. When a well-reasoned decision is applied to the treatment of dysphagia associated to HNC, functioning and quality of life are optimized^{2,4}.

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