

Clinical Forum

Prologue

Childhood Voice Disorders: Tell Me Something I Don't Know

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This clinical forum was conceived and crafted to address the needs of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) working in the public schools and other work settings with child voice clients. It grew out of the Conference on Voice Problems in School-Age Children that was held in conjunction with the 2002 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Schools Conference. A number of articles in this forum are adaptations and expansions of papers that were presented at that conference; others were developed to complement the nature and scope of this forum. As the title suggests, all articles share *new* research, diagnostic procedures, and intervention techniques that reflect the management of child voice clients on SLP caseloads.

Identification and management of pediatric voice disorders are important for the child's educational and social development, as well as physical and emotional health. This forum is unique in that it clearly and succinctly gives school practitioners the tools they need to assess, identify, and treat pediatric voice disorders in the school setting. Clinicians can confidently begin to administer the screening instruments, apply therapy techniques, and share educational materials with colleagues and families because these tools have been designed and field tested by experts in the field, specifically for public school use.

The forum begins with a review of the interdependent vocal parameters of respiration, phonation, resonance, and articulation. Christine Sapienza, Bari Ruddy, and Susan Baker discuss the profiles of children who are at risk for voice disorders and explore the nature of functional-, organic-, and neurogenic-based dysphonias that make up a large portion of the child voice population.

An article containing a quick screening tool for voice follows, by Linda Lee, Joseph Stemple, Leslie Glaze, and Lisa Kelchner. Designed to be administered in 5 to 10 min, it screens respiration, phonation, resonance, and vocal flexibility, which are the hallmarks of healthy and acceptable voice production. The authors also provide documents that were developed to help SLPs educate families of children with voice disorders.

A voice therapy primer by Celia Hooper offers a comprehensive review of voice management programs, with a special section devoted to online sources for busy clinicians. Of particular benefit to SLPs are the latest figures on incidence and prevalence of child voice disorders and the state of voice therapy for this population.

Identifying and quantifying the impact of voice disorders on a child's educational performance has been a long-standing challenge for school-based practitioners with gargantuan and complex caseloads. The next article, by Bari Ruddy and Christine Sapienza, clarifies how to identify and document children who are at risk under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act definition, and introduces some innovative ideas of how to incorporate voice therapy into the school-based setting.

Next, James Dworkin, Mark Marunick, and John Krouse introduce a comprehensive tutorial on the nature, assessment, and treatment of velopharyngeal dysfunction. They introduce both non-instrumental and instrumental assessment techniques and devote extensive detail to management, including general order of speech subsystem treatments.

Paradoxical vocal fold motion (PVFM) is a multifaceted disorder that usually involves dyspnea secondary to vocal fold approximation during the respiratory cycles, notably on

inspiration. Mary Sandage and Sherri Zelazny discuss potential etiologies, differential diagnosis, and management of the client with PVFM. Included are a number of useful tables on the diagnostic features of PVFM and symptoms of laryngopharyngeal reflux.

Last, but certainly not least, Geralyn Harvey Woodnorth discusses congenital and acquired abnormalities of the airway and the necessity of tracheostomy. The changes that occur with tracheostomy and how anatomical differences impact speech ability with respect to the voice source are discussed. School-based practitioners may use the included case studies as templates should they be asked to serve a medically fragile child on their caseload. Functional voice and speech goals are included.

Moving from the basics of anatomy and physiology of the vocal mechanism to treatment techniques for special populations, the experts listed here present state-of-the-art information designed to improve voice assessment and treatment procedures. It is hoped that this forum will encourage SLPs in their work with children who have vocal disorders.

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