

THE TREATMENT OF SUPRAGASTRIC BELCHING, A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE SPEECH AND VOICE THERAPIST.

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Background: In the field of gastroenterology we are sometimes faced with the phenomenon of excessive belching. It is described as a behaviour disorder characterized by a rapid intake of air into the oesophagus, immediately followed by rapid air expulsion (belching). It is thought that initially supragastric belching begins consciously, probably in response to an unpleasant sensation. Later conscious control is lost and it becomes an unconscious habit. The originating unpleasant sensation may be related to discomfort associated with some form of functional oesophageal disorder, dyspepsia or irritable bowel syndrome. A PhD study carried out in the Netherlands suggests speech therapy as a solution.

Method: The author has drawn up a treatment plan for supragastric belching based in part on the PhD study from the Netherlands and also on his own experiences. In this presentation the phenomenon will be discussed and the therapy programme explained, illustrated by case studies.

Results: The therapy programme was administered to six patients. The patients rated themselves pre and post therapy using a visual analogue scale. Four out of the six patients had successful outcomes when their pre and post treatment scores were compared.

Conclusion: This therapy programme can provide effective treatment for patient's provided they have been correctly diagnosed with supragastric belching by a gastroenterologist. .