

Use of neuromuscular electrostimulation in the treatment of dysphagia in patients with multiple sclerosis.

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Source

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:

We explored the possible effects of neuromuscular electrostimulation on the swallowing function of patients with multiple sclerosis and swallowing problems.

METHODS:

Twenty-five patients (average age, 53.1 years; SD, 9.8 years) with multiple sclerosis and swallowing problems were treated for 3 weeks with 2 sessions per week of neuromuscular electrostimulation. The average time since the onset of multiple sclerosis was 16.5 years (SD, 10.2 years). Seventeen patients were examined with transnasal flexible endoscopy 1 week before treatment and 1 week after treatment.

RESULTS:

After treatment, a significant decrease in pooling of saliva in the pyriform sinuses was seen in 6 patients ($p = 0.03$), and significantly less aspiration during swallowing of thin liquids ($p < 0.01$) was seen in 9 patients. Overall, the 25 patients reported that their swallowing had improved ($p < 0.01$), and in 20% of the patients, it had become less strenuous. No adverse effects of the treatment were reported.

CONCLUSIONS:

Our study showed that the treatment of swallowing problems with neuromuscular electrostimulation in patients with multiple sclerosis in this sample was successful in the reduction of pooling of saliva and in the reduction of aspiration.

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