Certified Specialist Programme in Dysphagia Training

Management and Treatment of Dysphagia

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Dysphagia is a medical term that refers to difficulty swallowing. It can occur at any stage of the swallowing process, from the mouth to the esophagus. Management and treatment of dysphagia involves a multidisciplinary approach to address the underlying causes and improve swallowing function. This glossary will cover key terms related to the management and treatment of dysphagia in the Certified Specialist Programme in Dysphagia Training.

1. Aspiration
   - **Concept:** Aspiration occurs when food, liquid, or saliva enters the airway instead of going down the esophagus during swallowing. This can lead to respiratory complications.
   - **Related Terms:** Silent aspiration, overt aspiration
   - **Explanation:** Aspiration is a serious concern for individuals with dysphagia as it can result in pneumonia or other respiratory issues. Treatment strategies may include modifying diet textures or postural techniques to reduce the risk of aspiration.

2. Barium Swallow Study
   - **Concept:** A barium swallow study, also known as a videofluoroscopic swallow study (VFSS), is a radiologic procedure used to evaluate the swallowing function. The individual consumes foods and liquids mixed with barium while X-rays are taken to assess the movement of the swallow.
   - **Related Terms:** Videofluoroscopy, modified barium swallow study
   - **Explanation:** Barium swallow studies are essential in diagnosing dysphagia and determining appropriate treatment interventions. They provide valuable information about the anatomy and physiology of the swallow.

3. Cervical Auscultation
   - **Concept:** Cervical auscultation is a non-invasive method of monitoring swallowing sounds using a stethoscope placed on the neck during eating and drinking. It can help identify signs of aspiration.
   - **Related Terms:** Dysphagia screening, bedside swallow evaluation
   - **Explanation:** Cervical auscultation is a valuable tool in the clinical assessment of dysphagia as it provides real-time feedback on swallowing function. Speech-language pathologists often use this technique in conjunction with other assessments.

4. Diet Modification
   - **Concept:** Diet modification involves altering the consistency or texture of foods and liquids to make swallowing safer and more efficient for individuals with dysphagia. Common modifications include thickened liquids or pureed foods.
   - **Related Terms:** Dysphagia diet levels, texture-modified diets
   - **Explanation:** Diet modification is a key component of dysphagia management. It aims to reduce the

risk of aspiration and improve overall nutritional intake. Dietitians play a crucial role in developing customized meal plans for individuals with dysphagia.

5. Enteral Feeding
- **Concept:** Enteral feeding is a method of delivering nutrition directly into the gastrointestinal tract through a feeding tube. It is used when individuals are unable to consume adequate nutrients orally due to dysphagia or other medical conditions.
- **Related Terms:** Percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube, nasogastric tube
- **Explanation:** Enteral feeding provides a way to maintain proper nutrition and hydration in individuals with severe dysphagia. Healthcare professionals must closely monitor tube placement and feeding schedules to prevent complications.

6. Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)
- **Concept:** FEES is a procedure that involves passing a flexible endoscope through the nose to visualize the swallowing process. It allows clinicians to assess the anatomy and function of the pharynx and larynx during swallowing.
- **Related Terms:** Nasoendoscopy, transnasal laryngoscopy
- **Explanation:** FEES is a valuable tool in diagnosing and treating dysphagia, especially in individuals who cannot undergo a barium swallow study. It provides detailed information about swallow function and helps guide therapeutic interventions.

7. Hyolaryngeal Excursion
- **Concept:** Hyolaryngeal excursion refers to the movement of the hyoid bone and larynx during swallowing. Proper excursion is essential for opening the upper esophageal sphincter and facilitating bolus transit.
- **Related Terms:** Swallowing kinematics, hyoid bone displacement
- **Explanation:** Impaired hyolaryngeal excursion is a common feature of dysphagia and can lead to swallowing difficulties. Therapy techniques such as the Mendelsohn maneuver target hyolaryngeal movement to improve swallow function.

8. Instrumental Assessment
- **Concept:** Instrumental assessment refers to the use of imaging or endoscopic techniques to evaluate swallowing function objectively. This includes procedures like videofluoroscopy and FEES.
- **Related Terms:** Objective swallowing evaluation, instrumental diagnostics
- **Explanation:** Instrumental assessments provide valuable information about the physiology of swallowing and help identify specific impairments that may not be evident during a clinical examination. They guide treatment planning and monitor progress over time.

9. Just-Noticeable Difference (JND)
- **Concept:** JND is the smallest detectable change in a sensory stimulus that an individual can perceive. In dysphagia management, it may refer to the minimal difference in bolus consistency or viscosity that influences swallowing safety and efficiency.
- **Related Terms:** Sensory threshold, discrimination threshold
- **Explanation:** Understanding the JND in dysphagia is crucial for determining the optimal texture

modifications for individuals with swallowing difficulties. It helps clinicians tailor diet recommendations to meet each person's unique needs.

10. Kinesiology
- **Concept:** Kinesiology is the study of human movement, including the biomechanics of swallowing. It involves analyzing the coordination and timing of muscle actions during the swallow to identify deficits and optimize function.
- **Related Terms:** Swallowing biomechanics, motor learning
- **Explanation:** Kinesiology plays a significant role in dysphagia management by providing insights into the kinematic aspects of swallowing. Therapists use this knowledge to design exercises that target specific muscle groups and improve swallow function.

11. Laryngeal Vestibule Closure
- **Concept:** Laryngeal vestibule closure refers to the protective mechanism that seals the airway entrance during swallowing to prevent aspiration. It involves the coordination of the epiglottis, arytenoid cartilages, and false vocal folds.
- **Related Terms:** Airway protection, supraglottic swallow
- **Explanation:** Impaired laryngeal vestibule closure is a common issue in dysphagia and can lead to penetration or aspiration of food or liquid. Therapy techniques focus on enhancing airway protection through appropriate swallowing maneuvers.

12. Manofluorography
- **Concept:** Manofluorography is a technique that combines videofluoroscopy with measurements of pharyngeal pressure during swallowing. It provides detailed information about the timing and coordination of muscle contractions in the pharynx.
- **Related Terms:** Pharyngeal manometry, pressure-impedance studies
- **Explanation:** Manofluorography is a valuable tool in dysphagia research and clinical practice. It helps quantify the forces involved in swallowing and can identify abnormalities in pressure generation that contribute to swallowing dysfunction.

13. Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES)
- **Concept:** NMES is a therapeutic technique that involves applying electrical currents to the muscles involved in swallowing to improve strength and coordination. It is used in dysphagia rehabilitation to enhance swallow function.
- **Related Terms:** VitalStim therapy, neuromuscular re-education
- **Explanation:** NMES has been shown to be effective in treating dysphagia by targeting specific muscle groups involved in swallowing. It can help retrain weakened or uncoordinated muscles to restore functional swallowing abilities.

14. Oral Motor Exercises
- **Concept:** Oral motor exercises are activities that target the muscles of the mouth and face to improve strength, coordination, and range of motion. They are commonly used in dysphagia therapy to enhance oral preparatory and oral propulsive phases of swallowing.
- **Related Terms:** Myofunctional therapy, facial exercises

- **Explanation:** Oral motor exercises play a crucial role in dysphagia rehabilitation by addressing deficits in oral motor control that may contribute to swallowing difficulties. Therapists tailor exercises to each individual's specific needs and goals.

15. Palatal Augmentation Prosthesis
- **Concept:** A palatal augmentation prosthesis is a custom-made device that covers the palate and helps improve closure between the oral and nasal cavities during swallowing. It is used in individuals with velopharyngeal insufficiency to reduce nasal regurgitation.
- **Related Terms:** Palatal lift, obturator
- **Explanation:** Palatal augmentation prostheses are designed to optimize velopharyngeal function and enhance speech and swallowing outcomes. They are fitted by prosthodontists and speech-language pathologists to meet the individual's specific needs.

16. Quality of Life (QoL) Measures
- **Concept:** QoL measures assess the impact of dysphagia on an individual's physical, social, and emotional well-being. They provide valuable information about the functional limitations and psychosocial effects of swallowing difficulties.
- **Related Terms:** Dysphagia-specific QoL scales, patient-reported outcomes
- **Explanation:** Evaluating quality of life in individuals with dysphagia is essential for comprehensive care and treatment planning. Clinicians use QoL measures to understand the personal experiences and challenges faced by patients with swallowing disorders.

17. Rehabilitation
- **Concept:** Rehabilitation refers to the process of restoring functional abilities and improving quality of life for individuals with dysphagia. It involves a combination of therapeutic interventions, exercises, and strategies to address swallowing impairments.
- **Related Terms:** Swallowing therapy, dysphagia rehabilitation
- **Explanation:** Rehabilitation plays a vital role in the management of dysphagia by focusing on improving swallow function, reducing aspiration risk, and enhancing overall quality of life. It may involve multiple disciplines working together to achieve optimal outcomes.

18. Swallowing Kinematics
- **Concept:** Swallowing kinematics involves the study of movement patterns and coordination during the swallow. It examines the timing, velocity, and range of motion of structures involved in swallowing to identify abnormalities and optimize function.
- **Related Terms:** Hyolaryngeal excursion, tongue movement
- **Explanation:** Understanding swallowing kinematics is essential for diagnosing and treating dysphagia. It helps clinicians pinpoint specific deficits in muscle coordination or timing that may contribute to swallowing difficulties and guides targeted interventions.

19. Thickened Liquids
- **Concept:** Thickened liquids are fluids that have been altered in viscosity to reduce the risk of aspiration in individuals with dysphagia. They are commonly used as a dietary modification to improve swallow safety.

- **Related Terms:** Nectar-thick, honey-thick, pudding-thick
- **Explanation:** Thickened liquids help slow down the flow of liquids during swallowing, making it easier for individuals with dysphagia to manage. Speech-language pathologists work with dietitians to determine the appropriate consistency based on individual needs.

20. Upright Postural Strategies
- **Concept:** Upright postural strategies involve positioning individuals in an upright or semi-upright posture during meals to optimize swallow function. This can help reduce the risk of aspiration and improve bolus clearance.
- **Related Terms:** Chin tuck, head turn, reclined posture
- **Explanation:** Postural strategies play a crucial role in dysphagia management by altering the position of the head and neck to facilitate safe and efficient swallowing. Clinicians may recommend specific postures based on individual swallow deficits and goals.

21. Videofluoroscopy
- **Concept:** Videofluoroscopy is a diagnostic imaging technique that allows real-time visualization of the swallowing process. It uses X-ray technology to capture the movement of food and liquid through the mouth and throat.
- **Related Terms:** Modified barium swallow study, barium swallow, fluoroscopy
- **Explanation:** Videofluoroscopy is considered the gold standard for assessing dysphagia as it provides detailed information about the anatomy and function of the swallow. It helps identify aspiration, penetration, and other abnormalities that may impact swallowing safety.

22. Weakness
- **Concept:** Weakness refers to reduced muscle strength or coordination in the structures involved in swallowing. It can lead to inefficient bolus propulsion, delayed swallow initiation, or incomplete airway protection during swallowing.
- **Related Terms:** Muscle weakness, hypotonia
- **Explanation:** Addressing weakness is a key component of dysphagia management, as it can significantly impact swallow function. Therapy techniques such as resistance training or neuromuscular electrical stimulation may be used to strengthen weakened muscles and improve swallowing performance.

23. Xerostomia
- **Concept:** Xerostomia is the medical term for dry mouth, a common symptom in individuals with dysphagia. It can result from reduced saliva production, medication side effects, or underlying medical conditions.
- **Related Terms:** Salivary gland dysfunction, hyposalivation
- **Explanation:** Xerostomia can affect oral intake and swallowing function by impairing bolus formation and transit. Treatment strategies may include oral hydration, saliva substitutes, or addressing the underlying causes of dry mouth to improve swallowing comfort and efficiency.

24. Yogic Swallowing Maneuver
- **Concept:** The yogic swallowing maneuver is a technique that combines controlled breathing and swallow exercises to enhance airway protection and reduce the risk of aspiration. It involves coordinating

the breath with a series of swallows to improve laryngeal closure.

- **Related Terms:** Supraglottic swallow, effortful swallow
- **Explanation:** The yogic swallowing maneuver is a therapeutic intervention used in dysphagia rehabilitation to promote safe and efficient swallowing. It focuses on strengthening the muscles involved in airway protection and improving swallow coordination.