

Swallow Apps: Byte Size Chunks of Information. Do they Improve Knowledge and Enhance Dysphagia Management?

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Abstract

Purpose: To assess the merit of Dysphagia-related Apps using qualitative research. To conclude, through consensus opinion, the areas of strength and areas for development and how the Apps can be effectively utilised in dysphagia management.

Methods: Qualified Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs); SLT assistants, and student SLTs, rated each App independently using a standard qualitative rating proforma scoring on:

- Ease of navigation
- Clarity of graphics
- Clarity and accuracy of anatomy
- Ease of transition between sections of the App
- Perceived increase in knowledge of swallow anatomy and function
- Perceived increase in confidence in swallowing management

Results: Six Apps were identified; covering normal swallowing, disordered swallowing, aspiration, oral and residue disorders. To date 30 responses per App have been received. Most respondents concurred that the Apps developments i.e. ease of navigation, clear graphics and transitions worked well. Less consensus was achieved when evaluating the accuracy of anatomy, improvement in knowledge and increased confidence in managing dysphagia.

Conclusions: Consensus has been consistent on App development and ease of use but there is less consensus on specialist topic areas such as accuracy of anatomy, clarity of images and videos, lack of explanations and labelling. Most respondents did not increase their knowledge or confidence in dysphagia management. Areas for improvement have been suggested and the author will share the feedback with the developers. Consensus to date suggests that these Apps should be targeted to the student, MDT member, patient and carer population.

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