

Highlighting the On-Going Feeding and Swallowing Needs of Children & Young People Presenting with Severe Acquired Brain Injury

Edwards L and Wales L

The Children's Trust, Tadworth, UK

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Abstract

Purpose: This study reviews feeding and swallowing presentation following a period of rehabilitation after Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) in childhood.

Methods:

Service evaluation: All children and young people over 8 years from one rehabilitation unit in the UK between 2010 and 2018. Routinely collected UK Functional Independence Measure and Functional Assessment Measure (UK FIM + FAM). We present the change in UKFIM+FAM score during rehabilitation and discharge profile using the Eating and Drinking Classification System (EDACS), where Level 1 represents 'eats and drinks safely and independently' while level 5 describes 'unable to eat or drink safely'.

Ethics: Local ethical procedures and governance for service evaluation of routine clinical data followed.

Results:

n=208 (42% female)

8 to 18 years (mean age at admission: 9.51 years)

Range of traumatic and non-traumatic acquired diagnoses.

UKFIM+FAM swallowing item score: Wilcoxon Test: $z = -7.021$ $p < 0.001$

EDACS levels on discharge: level 1 (49%); level 2 (13%); level 3 (10%); level 4 (9%); level 5 (20%)

Conclusion: Children and young people with severe ABI make significant progress with feeding and swallowing skills during a period of rehabilitation, however the need for on-going intervention is apparent. This study provides initial evidence that further feeding and swallowing rehabilitation by an appropriately trained speech and language therapist is required within the community setting.

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