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Difficulties in daily life reported by patients using tracheoesophageal speech with voice prosthesis

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Objective: Total laryngectomy has been performed in patients with advanced head and neck cancer, but it results in a permanent tracheal stoma and loss of phonatory function because the vocal cords are also removed. Tracheoesophageal speech with voice prosthesis (T-E speech) has contributed to an increased rate of voice reacquisition after total laryngectomy and an improvement of postoperative quality of life (QOL). However, no studies have been conducted on the difficulties in daily life reported by patients with T-E speech, or the association between these difficulties and QOL. We therefore examined the daily challenges faced by individuals with T-E speech.

Methods: We evaluated eight patients with T-E speech who were visiting our outpatient head and neck surgery department. A semi-structured interview was used for data collection. We asked these patients to freely talk about difficulties in their daily life caused by T-E speech. We coded their responses to extract categories and subcategories.

Results: We extracted 14 categories and 28 subcategories regarding difficulties in daily life reported by patients with T-E speech. The categories included difficulty dealing with phlegm, difficulty communicating with others, unwilling to go out due to fear of talking with others, inconvenience in eating and bathing, and discomfort sleeping due to phlegm stuck in a shunt.

Discussion: Patients with T-E speech have difficulties in daily life, which are particularly associated with phlegm, appearance, communication, and mentality, and these difficulties can affect their QOL.

Biography

Masayuki Miyoshi has completed his PhD (Health Science) at the age of 30 years from Tottori University and postdoctoral studies from Tottori University Faculty of Medicine. He is the Assistant Professor of Division of Medical Education Department of Faculty of Medicine, Tottori University. He has worked as a nurse. His speciality is Medical and Nursing Education, and research for Patients using T-E Speech with Voice Prosthesis.

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