

Implementation and evaluation of speech pathology-led referring process for VFSS

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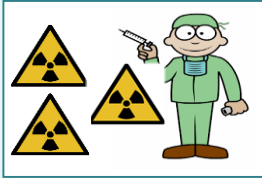


BACKGROUND AND AIMS

- Speech pathologists (SPs) use VFSS to treat dysphagia



- Only Doctors are authorised to request VFSS : Radiation Safety Act, Qld



- Inefficient workflow
- Can delay patient access to VFSS



Alternative model:

SPs refer to VFSS *under protocol*
Radiologist requests radiation test

AIM: implement & evaluate the SP-led VFSS referring model

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EVALUATION OF EXISTING VFSS REFERRING PROCESS

3-months inpatient referrals (*n* = 61)

Efficiency

Time to write request forms:
90% written within 2 days

10%
day 3-7

87% request forms completed after 1 contact

13%
2-3
contacts

Adherence to radiation safety regulations

JUSTIFICATION

Diagnostic radiation - benefits must outweigh the harm

67% request forms had sufficient clinical information to justify radiation exposure

33%
✗

OPTIMISATION

Radiation exposure must be as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA) to answer the clinical question

84% request forms included a clinical question to be answered by the VFSS, to optimise radiation exposure

16%
✗

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ESTABLISHMENT OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY-LED VFSS REFERRING MODEL

AUTHORISATION & GOVERNANCE

- ✓ **Authorisation:** by Director of Medical Imaging permitting SPs to refer patients for VFSS, under an *Internal Request protocol*
- ✓ **Endorsement of model for hospital-wide use:** Executive Director of RBWH Medical Services
- ✓ **Supported:** Executive Directors: Medicine, Surgery & Oncology Treating Consultants

SPEECH PATHOLOGIST TRAINING

- ✓ Designed with Radiation Safety Officer
 - ✓ Completed by 4 SPs - Duration: 2 hours; annually
- THEORY: Radiation safety training**
ARPANSA online module + **ASSESSMENT:** Pass online quiz
- PRACTICAL: Completion of VFSS Request Forms**
Complete Medical Imaging Request forms
ASSESSMENT: Demonstrate adherence to RANZCR requirements for justification & optimisation

IMPLEMENTATION

VFSS does NOT proceed



Treating SP identifies a need for VFSS

Verbal approval for VFSS from treating doctor

If doctor declines VFSS

If doctor approves VFSS



Trained VFSS referring SP completes VFSS request form, incl clinical information to *justify & optimise* radiation exposure

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PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF SP-LED VFSS REFERRING MODEL

First 3 months of inpatient referrals (n = 53)

Efficiency

Time to write request forms:
74% forms written within 2 days
26% written in 3-6 days

Patient safety

Clinical incidents



Inappropriate referrals



Adherence to radiation safety regulations

JUSTIFICATION

100% SP request forms contained sufficient clinical information to justify patient radiation exposure

OPTIMISATION

100% SP request forms included a clinical question to be answered by the VFSS, to optimise diagnostic value

Stakeholder feedback

Treating SPs & doctors
VFSS referring SPs
VFSS Radiologists



CONCLUSIONS

- SP-Led VFSS referring: supports radiation-safe referring practices & aims to improve work flow efficiency
- Critical factors for establishing and implementing SP-Led VFSS referring model:
✓ Radiation Safety Compliance **✓ SP training** **✓ Executive endorsement** **✓ Clear operating procedures**