

TELETHERAPY IN UNILATERAL VOCAL CORD PARALYSIS: A CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Vocal cord paralysis occurs as a result of damage to the recurrent laryngeal nerve. It has symptoms such as dysphonia shortness of breath and swallowing difficulty (Williamson, Shermetaro, 2021). In the treatment process of these patients, speech and language therapists (SLP) play an active role. The number of speech and language therapists in Turkey is very few, therefore accessibility to SLP is limited, especially for individuals living in rural areas.

PURPOSE

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of voice therapy of a patient with unilateral vocal cord paralysis via teletherapy. Therefore, it is aimed to determine the teletherapy effectiveness in a patient living in Şanlıurfa-Turkey.

METHOD

The patient is 32 years old male who was diagnosed with "Unilateral vocal cord paralysis" as a result of the ENT examination. His symptoms have been going for 2 years. In the first evaluation, the case was evaluated perceptually and acoustically. His V-RQOL score was 16 out of 40 and VHI was 20 out of 43. The maximum phonation time was 8 seconds and the s/z ratio was 0.7.

As for acoustics features, Fundamental Frequency (f0) was 213.054 Hz, jitter was 0.469% and Shimmer was 7.995%. Teletherapy conducted via Skype.

Vocal hygiene was introduced in the first session. Also vocal hygiene, "Vocal Function Exercises", "Glottal Attack", "Resonance Voice Therapy" techniques were added to 6 weeks therapy plan.

RESULTS

As a result of our therapy sessions, the patient had longer maximum phonation time which was 14 seconds. Also, s/z ratio was better compared to first assessment. His final V-RQOL score was 8 which showed that he had significantly higher voice related quality of life. The final VHI score was 6. Not only perceptual changes occurred in the patient, but also acoustic parameters were changed after the therapy (f0 = 264 Hz; jitter 0.38%; shimmer 7.17%).

In the current situation like pandemic, it is difficult to get face to face speech and language therapies. Therefore, teletherapy is quite a useful option.



Recommendations for Teletherapy

- First, determine if the patient is suitable for teletherapy.
- Both therapist and the patient should have all the required technological devices for the therapy.
- Ensure that you have access to a high-speed internet connection.
- Have a private, silent space with good lighting.
- Prepare yourself and the patient.
- Have the consent documents signed.

Reference

Williamson AJ, Shermetaro C. Unilateral Vocal Cord Paralysis. 2021 Jan 8. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2021 Jan-. PMID: 30571041.

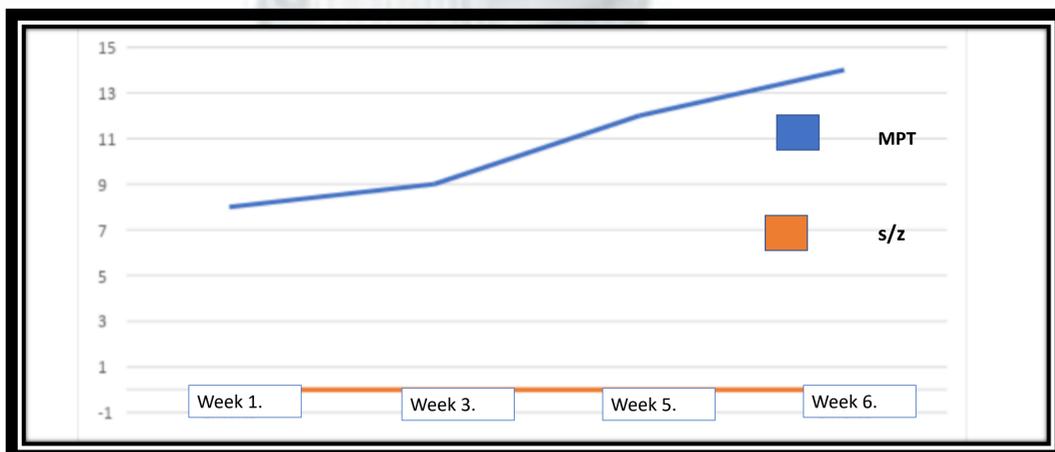


Table 1. Maximum phonation time and s/z ratio