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## Dysphagia: current reality and scope of the problem

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### Abstract

Dysphagia is a symptom of swallowing dysfunction that occurs between the mouth and the stomach. Although oropharyngeal dysphagia is a highly prevalent condition (occurring in up to 50% of elderly people and 50% of patients with neurological conditions) and is associated with aspiration, severe nutritional and respiratory complications and even death, most patients are not diagnosed and do not receive any treatment. By contrast, oesophageal dysphagia is less prevalent and less severe, but with better recognized symptoms caused by diseases affecting the enteric nervous system and/or oesophageal muscular layers. Recognition of the clinical relevance and complications of oesophageal and oropharyngeal dysphagia is growing among health-care professionals in many fields. In addition, the emergence of new methods to screen and assess swallow function at both the oropharynx and oesophagus, and marked advances in understanding the pathophysiology of these conditions, is paving the way for a new era of intensive research and active therapeutic strategies for affected patients. Indeed, a unified field of deglutology is developing, with new professional profiles to cover the needs of all patients with dysphagia in a nonfragmented way.

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Nature Publishing Group

Ovid Technologies, Inc.

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#### Medical

ClinicalTrials.gov

Genetic Alliance

MedlinePlus Health Information