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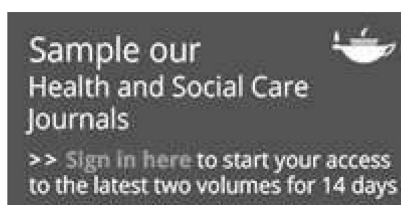
People with intellectual disabilities and dysphagia

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Abstract

Purpose: Dysphagia (difficulties in eating, drinking or swallowing) is associated with serious health complications and psychosocial sequelae. This review aims to summarise the state of the evidence regarding dysphagia in people with intellectual disabilities (excluding prevalence), identify gaps in the evidence base and highlight future research priorities.

Method: Studies published from 1 January 1990 to 19 July 2016 were identified using Medline. Cinahl. PsycINFO. Web of Science. email requests and cross citations.

Results: A total of 35 studies were included in the review. Themes identified were as follows: health conditions associated with dysphagia; mortality; health service use; practice and knowledge in supporting people with intellectual disabilities and dysphagia; intervention effectiveness and quality of life. Dysphagia is associated with respiratory infections and choking and may be under-recognised. Silent aspiration is common and may go unnoticed. Management practices exist, but there are few intervention studies and no randomised controlled trials (RCTs), and hence, the effectiveness of these is currently unclear.

Conclusion: Dysphagia is a key concern in relation to people with intellectual disabilities. There is urgent need for research on the management of dysphagia in people with intellectual disabilities, including mealtime support offered, positioning, dietary modification and impact on wellbeing.

• **Implications for Rehabilitation**

- Dysphagia is common in people with intellectual disabilities, associated with serious health risks and may be under-recognised.
- Caregivers of people with intellectual disabilities should be educated about dysphagia.
- There is an urgent need for research on improving the management of dysphagia in people with intellectual disabilities.
- Improved recognition and management of dysphagia may reduce the occurrence of associated health conditions and reduce hospital admissions and premature death in people with intellectual disabilities.

Q Keywords: Dysphagia intellectual disabilities review

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the content and writing of this article.

Additional information

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