

Name of journal: World Journal of Radiology

ESPS Manuscript NO: 21682

Manuscript Type: Retrospective Cohort Study

Impaired swallowing mechanics of post radiation therapy head and neck cancer patients: A retrospective videofluoroscopic study

Dear WJR editor,

Please accept our apologies for misunderstanding the intended length of this original manuscript. The instructions seemed to encourage authors to include full details and explanations whereas at least one of the reviewers emphasized brevity. Our strategy was to remove excess explanation and leave important details about the execution, findings and significance of this study. We hope we have reached a happy medium.

Reviewer 1

The authors investigated the swallowing mechanics in patients with post- radiation treatment of head and neck cancer, with interesting results. However, a lot of problems existed.

1. Title: The current title is not good because it is too broad without any indication of the function of the patients with post-radiation treatment of head and neck cancer. A better title can be indicated if it is more specific. For example, The swallowing function is impaired in patients with post-radiation treatment of head and neck cancer using videofluoroscipy.

Title was changed to “Impaired swallowing mechanics of post-radiation therapy head and neck cancer patients: A retrospective videofluoroscopic study”

2. Abstract: This part is too long especially the METHODS and the RESULTS parts. Please shorten them and include only those important items.

Completed as instructed.

3. Key words: Use the following key words which are better: Swallow mechanics, Post radiation, Head and neck cancer, Fluoroscipy, Anatomy

These were used as suggested.

4. Introduction: This part is too long. Please shorten it to ? - 1/3 the original length. The second sentence in paragraph 5 starting “The conventional approach to swallowing ----- -“ is not good. Please rephrase it.

The revision of the introduction is now 1/3 of the original length.

“Conventional approach” was deleted.

5. Materials and methods: Too long. Please shorten it to ? -1/3 the original length, and give only the major points here.

This section was shorted by nearly ½. This is a methods heavy paper and my concern about shortening this further is that others may not understand how to repeat elements of the study.

6. RESULTS: In this part, the expression is not good. For example, “Means and standard deviations and Mann-Whitney -----” in the first paragraph is not a good expression. It should be written as: The PAS scores were highly significantly ($P<0.0001$) greater in HNC (4.43 ± 2.42) than in the control (1.29 ± 0.56). Another example: “Means, standard deviations and two-tailed t- test-----” in the second paragraph should be written as: “ The duration of laryngeal elevation was significantly ($P=0.002$) shorter in HNC (0.29 ± 0.11 s) than in the control (0.48 ± 0.23 s), and the displacement of the larynx towards the cranial base is significantly ($P=0.02$) shorter in HNC (0.89 ± 0.63 cm) than in the control (1.41 ± 0.73 cm). “ Please rewrite the whole RESULTS as indicated above. In the fourth paragraph in this part, is a significance ($P<0.05$) existed in the Mahalanobis distances and other parameters? Please give the P value.

Thank you for the excellent suggestion. The results section has been entirely reworked as suggested.

7. Abbreviations: When first using an abbreviation, the full phrase should be given. For example, modified barium swallows (MBS). Later you can always use the abbreviation without mentioning the full phrase. However, the authors did not abide by this rule all the time. Although the authors had given the full phrase and the abbreviation in the first time using them, the authors gave the full phrase and the abbreviations again and again later in the text, including MBS and HNC. Please check the whole article and correct similar problems.

All abbreviations were checked.

In summary, this manuscript is transformed from a doctoral dissertation which is quite different from a journal article because a doctoral dissertation is usually very long with a lot of detailed information. However, a journal article is not long. Please shorten the whole manuscript based on the comments.

Thank you for your comments. We knew the paper was long, but hoped to provide a full details in an open source format so that others could adopt use of these methods. The paper is much shorter now and we hope strikes an appropriate balance.

Reviewer 2

This is a very good manuscript studying the effects of radiotherapy in the swallowing mechanism of patients. The method used, the evaluation of data and the presentation is excellent (very instructive figures, extensive statistics etc). The only disadvantage is its length. If you think that you could reduce it without leaving out critical information, it would probably be more easy for the reader to follow. A minor comment: check references 5 and 9 given in capitals.

Thank you for your comments. References were corrected as instructed. We did thin out a lot of explanation of the morphometric analysis. Hopefully those interested in these methods will research them in other places. One of the most helpful sources of information is the user's guide for the MophoJ software, which can be found at www.flywings.org.

Thank you for considering our manuscript.

Sincerely,

William G. Pearson, Jr., PhD