



MIGHTY OAKS FOUNDATION

Love the Elderly

NEWSLETTER - December 2017 Issue

Happy World Swallowing Day on December 12

Mighty Oaks Foundation is pleased to work with the Hong Kong Association of Speech Therapists to increase knowledge of how to manage swallowing disorders (dysphagia) in HK. Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing disorders.

Eating and drinking should be enjoyable, and swallowing is essential to everyday life. Swallowing problems can diminish quality of life: malnutrition and dehydration, aspiration pneumonia and social isolation can result if this is not managed properly.



World Swallowing Day: Dec 12, 2017

Swallowing Disorders (Dysphagia)



THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION
OF SPEECH THERAPISTS
香港言語治療師協會

Swallowing is **essential** to everyday life.
Eating and drinking should be **enjoyable**.

On average,
people swallow

600

times per day

Awake

350

Eating

200

Sleeping

50

Who does dysphagia impact?

4%

General population

22%

People over 50 years old

68%

People living in aged care facilities

Dysphagia

(dis-fay-juh)

noun, difficulty or discomfort in swallowing

Dysphagia, if undiagnosed or unmanaged, can result in:

- Choking
- Malnutrition
- Dehydration
- Aspiration pneumonia

40%

Stroke Survivors

45%

People with Head and Neck Cancer

84%

People with Parkinson's Disease

100%

People with Alzheimer's disease, at some point in disease progression

With regular treatment, **83%** of dysphagia patients recover or significantly improve



Doctors



Nurses



Speech Therapists



Care Givers

On World Swallowing Day, we are putting a spotlight on this because it is neglected and under-treated in our community.



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What are the causes?



- Ageing
- Dementia



- Neurological etiology
- Structural etiology
- Psychological etiology

What are the signs and symptoms?



What are the treatments?



Thank you to the over 2200 people who completed our survey on swallowing disorders. What were our key findings? Over 30 % of those surveyed did not know that swallowing disorders can lead to death. Over 20 % did not know that encouraging a person to drink more water to wash down food or eat a few mouthfuls of rice when he/she is choking is not right. Indeed this is dangerous.

We collaborated with HK University, Chinese University, HK Poly U and HK Education University to agree on the survey results, which were shared at a press conference hosted with the HK Association of Gerontology on Dec 10. Please see here for a copy of the press release.



This is just the start of our ongoing program to raise awareness of this critical issue, including hosting swallowing education workshops for the community. In 2018, will step up our program to train caregivers in HK to care better for those with swallowing disorders.

Help from an interdisciplinary team is required: doctors, nurses, speech therapists, dieticians, dentists, carers, etc. Did you know that speech therapists help to address swallowing issues as well as speech issues?

Addressing swallowing issues is important so we can all eat well, particularly as HK will be the world's third oldest country in 2050.