

SPEECH THERAPY AND VOCASTIM® ELECTROSTIMULATION INTERVENTIONS IN PATIENTS WITH HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE

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Introduction: Neuromuscular electrical stimulation for treating dysphagia, dysarthria and dysphonia is a well known therapeutic method, but no previous studies have investigated its effects in patients with Huntington's disease (HD), therefore, we applied this intervention to HD patients in order to ease the mentioned symptoms.

Purpose: to assess the effect of VocaSTIM® electrostimulation in HD patients with dysarthria, dysphonia and dysphagia.

Methods: patients with HD were examined. Participants received 10 speech therapy and 10 VocaSTIM® electrostimulation procedures. The effect was observed using maximum phonation time, evaluating subjective symptomatic alleviation according to the patient and medical staff, comparing electrical current strength, assessing changes in dysarthria using Robertson Dysarthria Profile.

Results: All patients tolerated electrostimulation. All of them reported decreased dysphagia symptoms. The maximum phonation time increased, there were positive changes in dysarthria. An average electrical current strength varied from 3mA to 8mA.

Conclusions: There are not enough objective and statistically reliable evidence to prove the positive effect of VocaSTIM® electrostimulation in HD patients, but results suggest that more extensive research can be useful in treating HD patients with dysphagia, dysarthria and dysphonia.