

Dysphagia in Focus

Fresenius Kabi Newsletter
Summer Edition 2014



Welcome

Fresenius Kabi's Dysphagia in Focus newsletter is a biannual newsletter for Speech and Language Therapists and Dietitians working in the area of dysphagia. If you would like further information on any area presented please contact Jill Sommerville.



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HOT TOPICS

Managing Swallowing Disorders Using Thickened Fluids

Dr. Ben Hanson

Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering, University College London

An impaired ability to eat or drink can significantly affect health and quality of life. In the UK and Ireland, millions are affected by 'dysphagia'. The preference is to maintain normal feeding, orally where possible, and this is often achieved by texture modification of the individual's diet, including thickened drinks. This article describes how and why thickened drinks can help in managing dysphagia, outlines some of the concerns, and points the way to getting the most out of that management strategy.

What Do We Mean By Viscosity?

'Viscosity' describes a fluid's physical resistance to flowing. A low-viscosity liquid (e.g. water) will flow very easily and quickly, whereas a higher-viscosity liquid (e.g. a thick milkshake) would flow more slowly and, if drunk through a

straw, would require a greater pressure difference (suction) to achieve the same flow rate as water. Within the mouth, a high-viscosity liquid would flow slowly, giving more chance to control and position a bolus ready to be swallowed.

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However, the viscosity should not be too high, since it needs to flow quickly past the larynx, and that should not require excessive muscular pressure.

If we observe a fruit smoothie, a thick liquid in a glass, it would have a high apparent viscosity since it doesn't flow very fast when we tip the glass. In fact, a very thick smoothie could be taken with a spoon: it wouldn't flow off the spoon so it appears to be a very high viscosity indeed (even 'solid'). However, you could still swallow the smoothie easily, it would flow quickly through the pharynx without much additional pressure needed. In contrast, honey is a 'Newtonian fluid', having a constant viscosity - drinking a full glass of honey would not be easy!

Standardisation

There is a wide range of oral nutritional supplements available, having well-defined nutritional characteristics. These pre-packaged products provide an opportunity to ensure consistent flow properties too. New thickened supplements have been created to have specific viscosity profiles.

In the UK and Ireland, the consistency of drinks for management of dysphagia is classified by the National Descriptors Document. These descriptive guidelines aim to provide a means to classify fluid consistency into three stages of thickness, based on their appearance. However since the evaluation is subjective, the interpretation is known to vary between practitioners, 'How thick is thick?'

A limitation is the lack of an objective viscosity measurement tool which is practical for universal use outside laboratories or industrial kitchens.

The potential benefits are enormous for patient safety, by providing control of the flow of liquids during swallowing, and for well-being and quality of life by enabling oral consumption of a varied, appealing and nutritious diet. There are challenges in ensuring reliability of diet consistency, and further research is required to better understand the relationships between swallowing and consistency.



Request Full Paper - if you would like to request the full article please email: jill.sommerville@fresenius-kabi.com

European Society 2013 Dysphagia Diagnosis a

Fiona Hill,
Senior Speech & Language Therapist
(Neurology), Tallaght Hospital, Dublin

The 3rd ESSD Congress held in Malmo, Sweden in September 2013 highlighted the multi-disciplinary challenge involved in the diagnosis and treatment of dysphagia, with a focus on dysphagia after treatment for head and neck cancer.

Dr Joanne Robbins, University of Wisconsin, gave an interesting talk on The Aging Swallow- Presbyphagia: A 'set-up' for dysphagia and is it preventable? With the aging swallow there is an uncoupling of oral and pharyngeal events, and reduced muscle strength affecting bolus propulsion, bolus driving and halted bolus transit. Is it preventable? Dr Robbins presented the research that positive changes in central nervous system wiring can occur through increasing tongue strength by means of tongue resistance training in the elderly, using systems such as the Iowa Oral Performance Instrument (IOPI).

Dr Bonnie Martin-Harris, Medical University of South Carolina, reported on preliminary findings of a study on Respiratory-Swallow Phase Training: Efficacy and Effects. Data from a prior study of patients treated for oropharyngeal cancer has linked alterations in the otherwise highly stable respiratory-swallowing phase pattern expiration-swallow-expiration to the swallowing impairment and penetration/aspiration.

Dr Martin-Harris and colleagues' current Phase II clinical trial evaluates the effect of a novel respiratory-swallow intervention on swallowing impairment and penetration/aspiration in a cohort of chronically dysphagic veterans following treatment for oropharyngeal cancer. The broad goal of this research is to develop ideal respiratory-swallowing phase training methods and regimens that alone or combined with traditional swallowing treatments

for Swallowing Disorders Congress

and Treatment: A Multi-disciplinary Challenge

improve swallowing function in the acute phases of recovery and improve long term patient outcome.

Following intervention they found statistically significant reductions in non-optimal respiratory swallow phase patterns and percentages of penetration and aspiration within this cohort. Dr Martin-Harris concluded that respiratory-swallow coordination can be retrained but further studies are required to compare this treatment to other swallowing therapies and to expand the approach to other populations that have indications of respiratory swallow phase impairments.

Dr. Ben Hanson, together with colleagues from University College London, presented the findings of a study investigating whether accuracy of preparing thickened fluids can be improved by using pre-thickened

products as a visual reference. Sixty student volunteers were divided into two groups (Group A and B) and were required to prepare thickened fluids using UK National Descriptors and starch thickener manufacturer's guidelines. Group B were additionally provided with pre thickened oral nutritional supplements as a visual reference. Despite having identical instructions participants' approaches varied widely in terms of mixing order, measuring quantities, and duration and vigour of mixing. Group B showed less variability in powder/liquid ratio and viscosity, and produced fluids closer to the target consistency than Group A. Hanson concluded that written instructions are insufficient to produce repeatable results and the provision of a pre-thickened product as a visual 'reference' improved the accuracy of thickening fluids.

Overall, ESSD is a worthwhile conference to attend with opportunity for lively debate, interesting lectures and networking with colleagues from around the world.



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RECENT EVENTS

Fresubin® thickened Launch Meeting Northern Ireland April 2014

More than 80 Dietitians and Speech and Language Therapists attended Fresenius Kabi's launch meeting which was held in the Culloden Hotel, 3rd April 2014. Speakers included Keri Nicholl, Clinical Lead SLT from Whiteabbey Hospital, who discussed different diet and food texture descriptors. This was followed by Anita McConnell, Community Dietitian, who spoke about the impact of dysphagia on nutritional status. The keynote speaker of the evening was Dr. Ben Hanson speaking about "Standardisation of Thickened Fluids". Overall it was a very insightful meeting with a lot of very positive feedback from attendees.



← Jill Sommerville
Dysphagia Specialist &
Dr Ben Hanson Keynote
Speaker



↑ Speakers: Keri Nicholl, Clinical Lead, Dysphagia SLT, Whiteabbey Hospital, NHSCT Anita McConnell, Community Dietitian SHSCT (Southern Health and Social Trust) and Ben Hanson, Senior Lecturer and Departmental Tutor Mechanical Engineering, University College London

IASLT study Evening, in conjunction with Fresenius Kabi

The annual IASLT study evening was held in the Shelbourne Hotel on May 28th. There was excellent attendance with a wide range of Speech & Language Therapists from hospital, community and private practice. This year the meeting was web cast to Cork University and Limerick University, and participants from both locations were able to tweet their questions to the speakers.

The meeting opened with a very moving and detailed presentation from Lesley Doyle, Senior SLT from Beaumont hospital. She spoke about creating a memory book for a Motor Neuron Disease patient who wanted this so her children would have a memory keepsake of their mother. Something that sounded so easy to produce turned out to be a very difficult

and moving project for the SLT team involved. Susan Lawson, Senior SLT from AMNCH, followed with an overview of the different dysphagia screening tools available to Irish Hospitals, and the strengths and weaknesses of the current tools used. Her review gave the audience insights into just how difficult it can be to train and keep staff trained on how to use the screening tools, and the additional SLT hours required to maintain an effective screening programme. Dr Ben Hanson concluded the meeting with an explanation on viscosity of fluids. He explained why it is impossible to tell the viscosity of a fluid from looking at it in a beaker, and also why the shear thinning behaviour of a fluid is a greater predictor of what will constitute a safe liquid to swallow, depending on the stage of Dysphagia.



↑ Jill Sommerville, Dysphagia Specialist, Lesley Doyle, Senior Speech & Language Therapist, Beaumont Hospital, Dr Ben Hanson, University of London, Anne Healy, Chairperson of IASLT and Susan Lawson, Senior Speech & Language Therapist AMNCH Hospital



← Attendees at the recent IASLT Meeting in the Shelbourne Hotel May 28th 2014





Fresubin® thickened - Pre-Thickened Oral Nutritional Supplement

Fresubin® thickened is a new pre-thickened oral nutritional supplement which has recently been launched in the Republic of Ireland. It is designed for the management of patients with dysphagia that are malnourished. The benefits of using **Fresubin® thickened** means:

- Guaranteed consistency for patients ensuring a safer swallow and more palatable taste
- Time saving for staff compared to currently manually thickening oral nutritional supplements
- High energy (300kcal/200ml) and high protein (20g/200ml) to meet patients' nutritional needs
- 2 gradually thicker consistencies to suit different levels of dysphagia
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Recommend Fresubin® thickened for your patients to help them achieve their nutritional intake in a safer, more convenient way.

Thick and Easy - The No.1 Food Thickener in UK and Ireland

Thick and Easy Releases 98% of Fluid Back into The Body

Thick and Easy contains 100% maize starch giving optimal release to ensure patient hydration. The maize starch binds to water molecules resulting in a thicker consistency of fluids. If water molecules remain bound to the molecules of the thickener, they are not available for the patient to absorb into their system. Studies found that starch based thickeners were no different to unmodified fluids in terms of water release, making Thick and Easy a suitable product to help ensure that patients receive adequate hydration.

Only Takes 1 Minute to Thicken

Once you have added Thick and Easy to a fluid, leave to stand for 1 minute before serving.

Easy to Follow Mixing Guidelines

Thick and Easy has 1 set of mixing guidelines for "Hot and Cold" fluids and foods.

To receive a copy of these guidelines or Thick & Easy shakers, simply call (01) 8413030.



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2. Click to select the samples you need
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DIARY DATES

- » **SEPT 6TH - 9TH 2014** - ESPEN, Geneva, Switzerland
- » **OCT 11TH 2014** - INDI Conference and AGM
- » **OCT 14TH - 15TH 2014** - BAPEN, Harrogate, UK
- » **OCT 23RD - 25TH 2014** - ESSD, Brussels, Belgium
- » **DEC 9TH 2014** - Fresenius Kabi INDI Meeting, Conrad Hotel, Dublin



WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT

Winner of Fresubin Kabi / IASLT Trip to ESSD

The winner was announced recently as Anne Barrett, a recently graduated Speech & Language Therapist from Cork. Her winning article will appear in the next newsletter, entitled: *Thick and Easy releases 98% of the fluid back it thickens back to the patient. Why is this of critical importance to patients who suffer from dysphagia?*