

A Comprehensive Assessment of Dysphagia among Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Al-Baha region, Saudi Arabia

Abdullah Ali H Alzahrani, PhD* Nagesh Bhat, PhD** Abdulmajeed A A Sindi, PhD*** AbdAllah Ibrahim A Mudawi, PhD****
Eltayeb Mohamed Alhassan, PhD***** Basim Othman, PhD***** Mohammad A Albanghali, PhD*****

ABSTRACT

To assess dysphagia and nutritional status among adults with intellectual disabilities living in an institutional care facility in Al Baha, Saudi ArabiaA cross-sectional study was conducted from May to October 2024 among 89 residents of special care homes. Demographics, the Decayed Missed Filled Teeth (DMFT) index, Dysphagia Handicap Index (DHI), and Eating Assessment Tool-10 (EAT-10) were recorded. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 27, with p-values < 0.05 considered significant. The mean age of participants was 30.11 years (SD = 4.39). The mean Total DHI score was 50.36 (SD = 20.64), with functional, physical, and emotional domain scores of 18.06 (SD = 9.10), 17.84 (SD = 7.18), and 14.44 (SD = 6.08), respectively. The mean EAT-10 score was 22.34 (SD = 3.48). No significant differences were found across the severity of intellectual disabilities. A significant correlation was observed between DMFT and DHI ($r = 0.635$), DMFT and EAT-10 ($r = 0.703$), and DHI and EAT-10 ($r = 0.585$). Dysphagia is a significant concern for adults with intellectual disabilities, affecting nutrition and quality of life. Effective management strategies, including mealtime support and dietary modifications, are essential to enhance well-being in this population. Further research is warranted to explore comprehensive care approaches.

KEYWORDS: *Dysphagia, Intellectual Disabilities, Quality of Life, Eating Assessment Tool-10 (EAT-10), Dysphagia Handicap Index (DHI)*

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* Department of Oral and Dental Health
School of Applied Medical Sciences, Al-Baha University
Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.
E-mail: aahalzahrani@bu.edu.sa

** Professor, Preventive Dental Sciences Department
Faculty of Dentistry, Al-Baha University, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.

*** Associate Professor, Department of Basic Medical Sciences
Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences, Al-Baha University, Saudi Arabia.

**** Assistant Professor, Department of Oral and Dental Health
School of Applied Medical Sciences, Al-Baha University, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.

***** Associate Professor, Department of Public Health
Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences, Al-Baha University, Saudi Arabia.