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New Zealand
Speech-language
Therapists' Association

*Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika
Reo Kōrero o Aotearoa*

Use of Ultrasound for Swallowing and Upper Airway Assessment

NZSTA Position Statement

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NZSTA Position Statement

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We advise our members not to use airway or swallowing ultrasound for routine assessment and clinical decision-making.

Current evidence

The exploration of ultrasound for swallowing and upper airway assessment is gaining momentum in research. An international group of multidisciplinary clinicians, including New Zealand researchers and clinicians, was recently established to research this instrumental tool and ascertain the utility of ultrasound in speech and language therapy services.

Several recent reviews of ultrasound's utility for swallowing and laryngeal assessment have been published. While growing evidence supports using ultrasound as an adjunct to speech-language therapy clinical assessment of swallowing and laryngeal function, the current literature does not support its use as a standalone tool. Further work is required before ultrasound assessment can be safely and effectively translated into widespread routine clinical practice.

References

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