

Examining the Characteristics of Dysphagia on Instrumental Assessment in Atypical Parkinsonian Syndromes



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1. Introduction

- Atypical parkinsonian syndromes (APS) are a distinct group of rare neurodegenerative conditions including progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), multiple system atrophy (MSA), dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB), and corticobasal degeneration (CBD).
- Dysphagia is a highly prevalent and debilitating symptom experienced by individuals with APS, with aspiration pneumonia emerging as a leading cause of death in this population¹.
- Compared to those with idiopathic Parkinson's disease, individuals with APS experience dysphagia earlier and more severely. The presence of dysphagia therefore may serve as an important diagnostic and prognostic factor in this cohort.

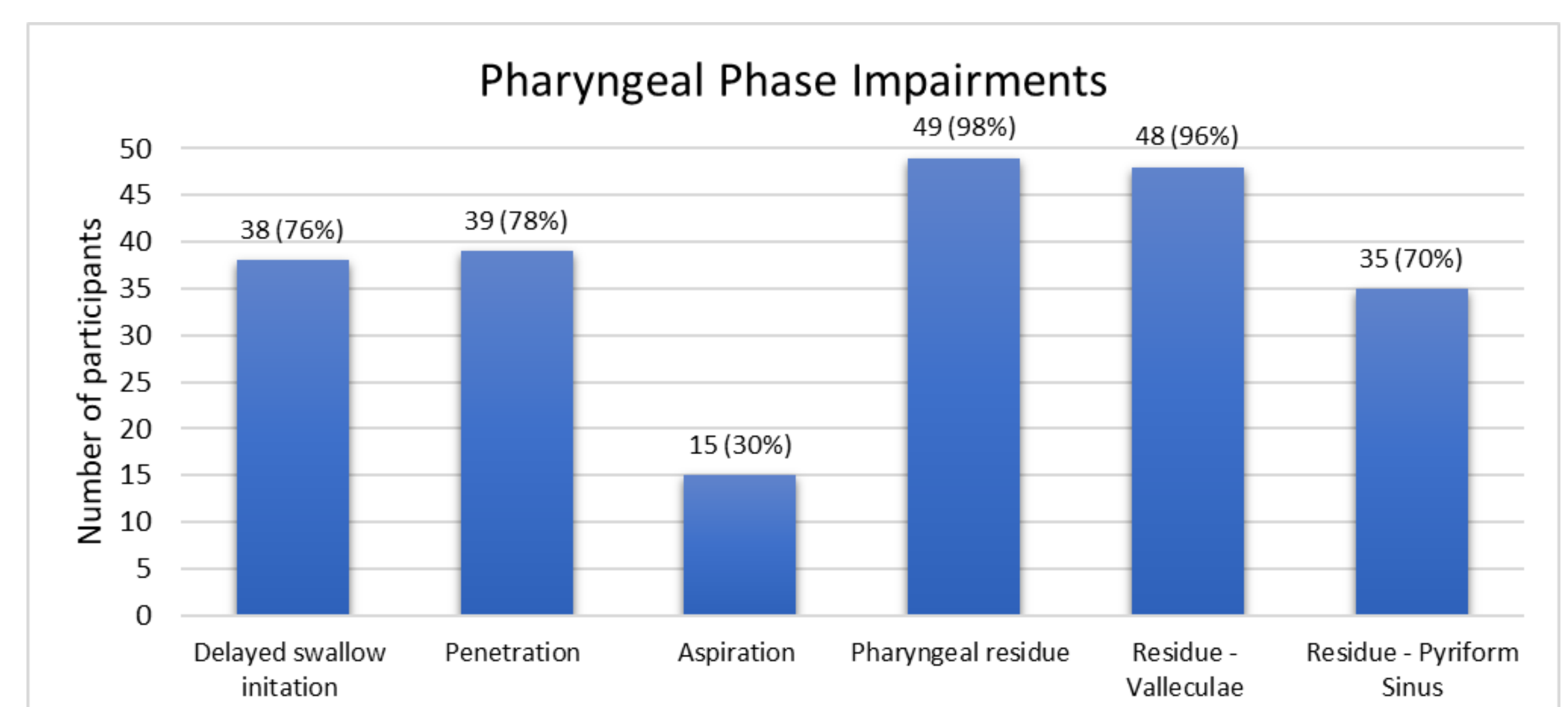
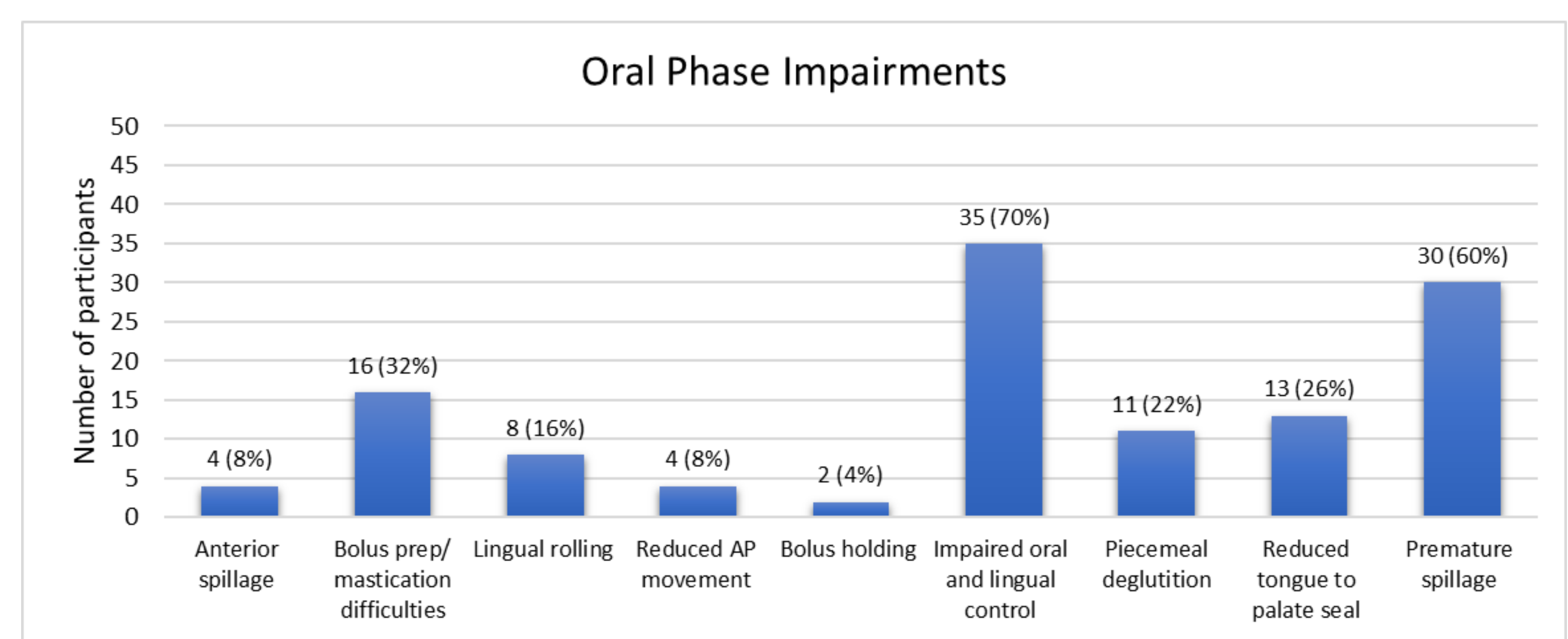
Aim: This study aimed to determine the characteristic features of dysphagia on instrumental examination in individuals with APS.

2. Methodology

- A retrospective chart review including data from individuals with APS who attended for instrumental swallow evaluation in an acute care setting between January 2008 and December 2023.
- Eligible participants were identified through the European Reference Network on Rare Neurological Diseases (ERN-RND) and a hospital database.
- Patient medical charts, videofluoroscopy (VFSS) and fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES) reports were reviewed.

3. Results

- Data from fifty individuals (32 male, 18 female) aged between 54 and 92 years (mean age: 75.1, standard deviation: 7.88) was obtained. Of these, 23 (46%) had PSP, 11 (22%) had MSA, 14 (28%) had DLB, and 2 (4%) had CBD.



4. Conclusion

Results confirm that dysphagia is a common symptom in this population, with all phases of swallowing affected across subtypes. Findings have potential to contribute to the early differential diagnosis of APS which may result in better clinical outcomes, higher quality of care, and increased quality of life for individuals living with these conditions.

Reference: ¹ dell'Aquila C, Zoccolella S, Cardinali V, de Mari M, Iliceto G, Tartaglione B, et al. Predictors of survival in a series of clinically diagnosed progressive supranuclear palsy patients. *Parkinsonism & Related Disorders*. 2013 Nov;19(11):980–5.