

Voice Overuse and Abuse among Professional Voice Users

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Objective: To determine the incidence of pathological conditions resulting from voice abuse or overuse in professional voice users.

Design: Prospective study from 1978 to 1999.

Setting: Outpatient clinic.

Subjects: 123 Muslim Preachers and 7 Singers. One hundred and nineteen presented with hoarseness of voice, pain while singing or speaking and difficulty to go up to higher notes.

Results: During the study period one hundred and thirty professional voice users were seen. Females 38, males 92. All had been subjected to upper endoscopy and flexible per nasal endoscopy. Some of them had more than one pathology. One hundred and fifteen pathological conditions were seen either directly or indirectly related to voice abuse or overuse by the professional voice users (injected vocal cords 49, haemorrhage of the vocal cords 27, nodule of vocal cords 19, reflux laryngitis and pharyngitis 8, laryngeal polyps 5, severe tension 4, mogiphonia 2, pachydermia 1). Other pathological entities seen in this group which are unrelated to voice abuse or overuse are: tonsillitis 7, vasomotor rhinitis 7, allergic rhinitis 4, sinusitis 4, superior laryngeal nerve paralysis 2, cancer phobia 2, left vocal cord carcinoma 1, myasthenia gravis 1, miscellaneous 18.

Conclusion: The majority of preachers and singers (59%) in this study group suffered from injected vocal cords, haemorrhage, and vocal cord nodule due to voice abuse and overuse, because most of them have not received any formal training and many of them sing or deliver their speech outside their own capability. Many of these preachers do smoke but do not consume alcohol, the singers however, in this group consume alcohol, cigarettes, caffeine and even some use drugs. Reflux laryngitis was more common among singers than preachers because of the previous factors and late night meals.