

Improving compliance with supervision documentation in dysphagia management: Education development and staff knowledge evaluation

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Background

Phase one of this quality improvement project, completed in 2025, identified persistent non-compliance with Safer Care Victoria's (SCV's) supervision documentation guidelines within Speech Pathology progress notes at Cabrini Health. Despite the introduction of minimum documentation standards in August 2024, more than one-third of documentation recommending supervision for patients with dysphagia remained non-compliant. The most common source of non-compliance was ambiguity in documenting consistent, guideline-aligned communication of safe eating and drinking requirements. Phase two will evaluate the effectiveness of targeted education in improving Speech Pathology staff knowledge of SCV's supervision documentation requirements and identify areas requiring further education and quality improvement. A formal re-audit of documentation compliance is planned for 2027 to assess the longer-term impact of the intervention.

Aim

The aim of this research project was to develop and implement targeted education for Speech Pathology staff addressing SCV-6ES documentation requirements with a focus on standardised terminology, clear differentiation between supervision 'timing' and 'duration,' and appropriate use of documentation template.

A further aim was to assess staff knowledge and understanding of these requirements following education implementation.

Method

A quantitative, single-group, repeated-measures study was conducted. All current Cabrini speech pathologists were invited via email to participate. Each participant was asked to complete three tasks at their own pace within 1.5-week period: (1) a pre-education survey, consisting of questions on employment status and history, Likert-scale self-ratings of confidence in making supervision recommendations, and two clinical case vignettes requiring participants to assess each case and provide supervision recommendations; (2) a 15-minute education package, presented as a PowerPoint module and video, which reviewed all six SCV elements with an emphasis on 'When' and 'How Long', using examples and analogies; and (3) a post-education survey, consisting of two new case vignettes and questions about perceived challenges and general feedback.

Results

A total of seven certified practising speech pathologists (CPSP) responded to the pre- and post-survey during the 1.5-week period. Participant employment status ranged across full-time (n = 2, 28.57%), part-time (n = 2; 28.57%), and casual (n = 3; 42.86%), with 1 – 10+ years of clinical experience and experience working across multiple wards at Cabrini. Majority of participants (n = 5; 71.43%) reported receiving previous dysphagia training specific to SCV's supervision documentation standards.

For the four self-reported items, participants rated themselves higher in the post-survey at T2 (M = 5, IQR = [4, 5]) compared to the pre-survey at T1 (M = 4, IQR = 0). Participants demonstrated this increase across all four statements (confidence for the "When" element, confidence for the "How long" element, knowledge for the "When" element, and knowledge for the "How long" element).

For case vignette items, participants scored higher in the post-survey at T2 (M = 14, IQR = [10, 16]) compared to the pre-survey at T1 (M = 12, IQR = [10, 16]), however this increase was not statistically significant, $p > .5$.

In the post-survey feedback form, participants also reported positive feedback regarding the cases vignettes. Further feedback included:

- Incorporating an example with all six SCV elements
- Incorporating an example with complex presentations.

Conclusion

This study highlights the effectiveness of implementing an educational intervention to target speech pathology staff's confidence in SCV's clinical standards. Despite the effectiveness in improving confidence, speech pathology staff's knowledge remains unchanged. These findings highlight the need for future research to target and enhance SP staff's knowledge using other educational methods and mediums. Additionally, it is recommended that a formal re-audit of SP documentation at Phase 3 of the study be completed to examine the long-term effectiveness of said education.

References

Safer Care Victoria. (2026). Communicating safe eating and drinking.
<https://www.safercare.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/GUIDANCE%20Communicating%20safe%20eating%20and%20drinking.pdf>