Speech pathology telepractice beneficial in head, neck cancer

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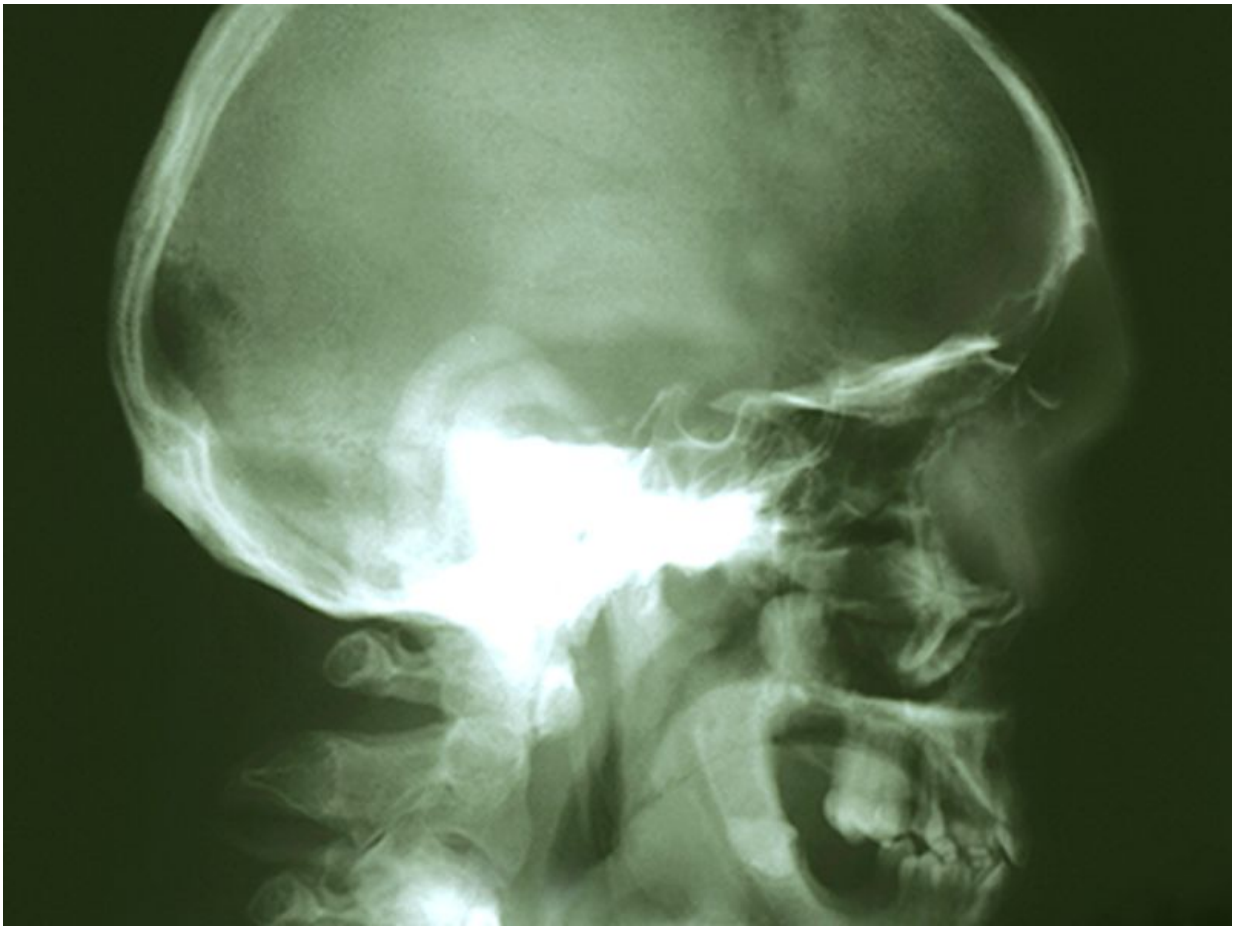

(HealthDay)—For patients with head and neck cancer, a multisite speech

pathology telepractice service is associated with higher service efficiency and treatment satisfaction compared with standard care, according to a study published online Feb. 22 in *Head & Neck*.

Clare L. Burns, Ph.D., from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Australia, and colleagues conducted a multicenter controlled trial within a large public cancer service. Referrals from speech pathologists at three regional sites were managed by a specialist clinician from a cancer center via standard care, which comprised phone, e-mail support, and appointments at the cancer center, or via a newly established telepractice service, which included online consultation between the cancer center and the regional sites. Data were included for 82 referrals that were managed: 39 for standard care and 43 for telepractice care.

The researchers found that service efficiency favored the telepractice model, with a significant decrease in the number and duration of contact events needed for referral management ($P = 0.004$ and $P = 0.024$, respectively). The telepractice service also had higher consumer and clinician satisfaction.

"A speech pathology telepractice service benefits both the patient and health provider through higher service efficiency and treatment satisfaction," the authors write.

More information: Abstract
Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)