

# 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](#)  
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