Costs up for neonates with vocal fold motion impairment

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(HealthDay)—For neonates undergoing congenital heart surgery (CHS),

vocal fold motion impairment (VFMI) is associated with increased costs due to increased post-procedure length of stay (PPLOS), according to a study published online March 15 in *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*.

Stephanie Elyse Ambrose, M.D., from the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, and colleagues examined the cost, PPLOS, and outcomes for neonates with VFMI after CHS in a cross-sectional analysis of the 2012 Kids' Inpatient Database. A total of 4,139 neonates who underwent CHS were identified; 3,725 of them survived. Overall, 6.92 percent of the neonates who survived were diagnosed with VFMI.

The researchers found that compared to neonates without VFMI diagnoses, those with VFMI had significantly higher total cost (by $34,000) and 9.1 days longer PPLOS. The presence of VFMI was no longer significant when PPLOS was included as a covariate in the model for cost. No differences were seen in the odds of pneumonia, gastrostomy, or tracheostomy.

"Vocal fold motion impairment after CHS was associated with significant increases in cost owing to increased PPLOS," the authors write. "These findings provide a foundation to further investigate standardized screening for VFMI following CHS; early identification and treatment may decrease cost and PPLOS."

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