

# SAHK

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**Introduction:** Dysphagia, any difficulties encountered during the process of passing food or liquid from mouth to stomach, is one of the biggest concerns for individuals, particularly older adults, with developmental disabilities. In considering the heterogeneity and progressive nature of their impairments, services focusing on alleviating biological signs and symptoms of dysphagia are inadequate to fulfil their psychosocial needs. A person-centered and whole-team approach spanning adulthood offers a better solution in dysphagia management.

**Aim:** This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of an individualised and structured full-day programme in dysphagia management for adults with developmental disabilities in minimizing impairment and promoting activity, participation and well-being.

**Materials and Methods:** Three middle-aged male adults with cerebral palsy and moderate dysphagia participated in a 26-week intervention programme spanning across vocational and residential settings. The programme emphasized participants' active involvement and their collaboration with multiple disciplines of staff in managing their needs, perspectives and expectations across the entire day. In addition to regular therapeutic interventions, custom-made follow-up arrangement and environmental adaptations in everyday routine as well as education for significant others of the participants were also provided. Pre- and post-measurements on impairment, activity, participation and well-being levels by the Therapy Outcome Measures (TOM) were recorded.

**Results and Conclusions:** Upon completion of the programme, one participant showed improved TOM score in impairment while all of them showed improved scores in activity, participation and well-being. The improved scores reflected the effectiveness of the approach which draws close relevance to individual's personal concerns over eating-and-drinking in day-to-day contexts despite the relatively static or even deteriorating conditions in body structure and functions. For older adults with developmental disabilities, counteracting the impact of early aging as well as promoting self-efficacy for overcoming the anticipated challenges through a person-centered and whole-team approach is important across the adult life course.



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