

Oropharyngeal dysphagia in Portugal in the last decade: A mixed-methods systematic review

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INTRODUCTION

- Deglutition combines fast, sequenced and coordinated neuromuscular actions, to conduct food and fluids from mouth to stomach.
- **Oropharyngeal dysphagia (OD) is a symptom that reflects one or more disorders in deglutition.**
- The disorders can be anatomical or physiological and its origin can be neurological or structural.
- Oropharyngeal dysphagia can occur from early childhood to old age¹.

OBJECTIVE

- To characterise the state of the art of national research on OD, through a systematic literature review of original studies conducted in Portugal during the last decade.

METHODS

- The search was performed in four databases: MEDLINE (PubMed), Scopus, Web of Science and Repositórios Científicos de Acesso Aberto de Portugal (RCAAP).
- Inclusion criteria: Original randomised controlled trials (RCTs), non-randomised experimental studies, cohort studies, control-case studies, observational studies and case series, conducted in Portugal, between January 2011 and January 2021.
- The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used to assess the methodological quality of the included studies.

RESULTS

- The process of study selection is presented in Figure 1.
- A total of 692 articles were found.
- Fifteen articles met the selection criteria and were included for review.
- **The overall evaluation shows that most experimental studies presented small samples, with no randomisation processes, and poor descriptive statistical analysis.**

DISCUSSION

- Lack of studies with focus on OD in paediatric and oncologic population;
- High prevalence of OD in studies with older population living in nursing homes and stroke survivors;
- Portuguese hospitals recognise OD as a factor of poor patient prognosis;
- Some authors highlighted the lack of knowledge of patients, families and health professionals on OD and its consequences.

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Condition	Prevalence of OD
Parkinson's disease	35-82% ²
Alzheimer's disease	57-84% ^{3,4}
Multiple sclerosis	34% ⁵
Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis	47-86% ^{6,7}
Stroke (acute phase)	64-78% ⁸
Stroke (chronic phase)	40-81% ⁸

Table 1. Prevalence of oropharyngeal dysphagia in neurological conditions.

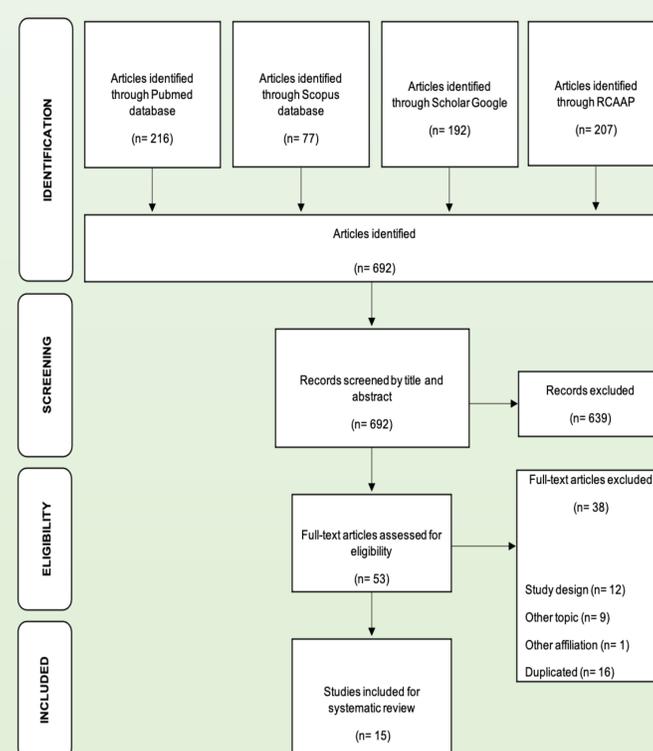


Fig. 1 - Flow diagram describing the study selection process, adapted from PRISMA

Few studies were conducted with focus on OD;

Overall methodological quality was considered poor;

CONCLUSIONS

The need to continue to study evaluation tools and their psychometric characteristics was consensual;

The need for the development of well-design experimental studies is warranted.