

## **OP 20: Administering Sinhala Pedi-EAT to detect feeding difficulties in children with disabilities: Evidence from a university clinic in Sri Lanka**

**Supun Priyadarshana**

*Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya*

**Introduction:** Dysphagia in children with disabilities leads to aspiration and has a long-term impact on a child's development. The Sinhala Pediatric Eating Assessment Tool (Pedi-EAT) is a parent-report instrument developed to assess symptoms of feeding problems in children aged 6 months to 7 years.

**Objectives:** To determine feeding related concerns of pediatric cohort with disabilities and the association between Sinhala Pedi-EAT scores and parental feeding experience of children with disabilities.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted at the MDT clinic for children with disabilities and their families at a university clinic. The study population included parents of children between 6 months-7 years attending the MDT clinic from November to December 2019. The Sinhala Pedi-Eat was administered to 410 parents of children with disabilities.

**Results:** The most prevalent feeding concerns under the physiologic symptoms was cough during or after mealtime (71%, n=291). Under the problematic mealtime behaviors, rejection of the foods (54%, n=221) was the commonest. Mealtime was longer than 45 minutes for majority of the children (61%, n=149). They were red flagged for a diagnosis of dysphagia. Children who were diagnosed with developmental disorders (72%, n=296) presented higher risk for having dysphagia.

**Conclusions:** Highest scored feeding difficulties were under the problematic mealtime behaviours of Pedi-EAT questionnaire. Educating parents/ caregivers regarding helpful and unhelpful behaviors on child's feeding will aid in managing problematic feeding behaviours in children. Pedi-EAT can be reliably used to screen feeding difficulties in children in Sri Lankan clinical context.

**Keywords:** Dysphagia, feeding, children, disability, Pedi-EAT