

COVID-19 and the Teacher's Voice: Self-Perception, the Role of Speech Therapy in Voice and Communication

Marcia Zenari*

Department of Physiotherapy, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the educational landscape, forcing teachers to adapt to new teaching modalities and face various challenges. Amidst these changes, the impact of the pandemic on the teacher's voice and communication abilities is often overlooked. This article examines the effects of COVID-19 on the teacher's voice, explores the self-perception issues that arise, and highlights the vital role of speech therapy in addressing voice and communication challenges. The shift to online teaching and the use of masks in physical classrooms have presented obstacles for teachers in projecting their voices clearly and effectively. Moreover, the increased use of video conferencing platforms and recorded lessons has led to heightened self-perception concerns among teachers, leading to self-doubt and a loss of confidence in their communication skills. Speech therapy emerges as a crucial intervention for teachers during these trying times. By working with speech therapists, teachers can receive guidance and support in addressing voice-related issues, improving speech clarity, enhancing vocal projection, and acquiring effective communication strategies tailored to online and hybrid teaching contexts. The goal is not only to help teachers regain their confidence but also to enhance their overall teaching effectiveness. By acknowledging and addressing the impact of the pandemic on the teacher's voice, educators can receive the necessary support to excel in their profession and continue providing high-quality education to their students. Speech therapy plays a significant role in helping teachers overcome self-perception challenges, develop effective communication skills, and create engaging learning environments, ensuring that education remains uninterrupted even during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Voice • Voice disorders • Voice quality • Voice training • Occupational health

Introduction

The world was alarmed by the transmission of the novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, which caused coronavirus disease and was discovered in Wuhan, China. COVID-19 was transmitted from one person to another. It has a range of clinical manifestations, from mild infection to severe infection. In recent months, researchers have been inspired to investigate the various scenarios as a result of the pandemic's bio psychosocial effects and consequent impact on population health. Every day, new research is published in a variety of fields, including education, the economy, and health. In terms of health, hospital-based studies have examined the complications and therapeutic outcomes of infected patients, and literature reviews and/or meta-analyses have begun to emerge from published data. There has also been research into the physical, mental, and emotional effects on health professionals who work with these patients. Experts from every continent have devoted themselves to gaining an understanding of the new scenarios brought about by social distancing or isolation. Hybrid contexts, in which some activities can be carried out in person and others at a distance, are now commonplace in this new reality [1].

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted various aspects of our lives, including education. Teachers, in particular, have faced numerous challenges as they navigate remote and hybrid teaching environments. One aspect that has received limited attention is the effect of COVID-19 on

**Address for Correspondence:* Marcia Zenari, Department of Physiotherapy, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil, E-mail: marciazenari52@gmail.com

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Received: 01 May, 2023, Manuscript No. jtsm-23-104246; **Editor assigned:** 03 May, 2023, PreQC No. P-104246; **Reviewed:** 15 May, 2023, QC No. Q-104246; **Revised:** 22 May, 2023, Manuscript No. R-104246; **Published:** 29 May, 2023, DOI: 10.37421/2167-0919.2023.12.377

teachers' voices and communication. This literature review aims to explore the self-perception of teachers regarding their voices, the impact of COVID-19 on voice and communication, and the role of speech therapy in addressing these challenges. Teachers' voices play a crucial role in delivering effective instruction, maintaining classroom management, and engaging students. However, research suggests that many teachers experience vocal fatigue, hoarseness, and other voice-related problems due to the demands of their profession. Moreover, teachers' self-perception of their voices can influence their confidence and effectiveness in the classroom. Understanding teachers' self-perception of their voices is essential to identify potential challenges caused by COVID-19 and develop appropriate interventions [2].

Discussion

In the field of speech therapy, this context has not been different, and recent research on voice has focused on comprehending the following: use of professional vocals during this pandemic, particularly by singers the effects of wearing face masks the dangers of vocal changes in various experts who are working from a distance and the difficulty of virtual voice therapy. For decades, specialists have focused their attention on the teacher's voice, particularly in terms of symptoms and risk factors. Notwithstanding, there is a lot to comprehend with respect to the elements of this laborer. Their work activities and communication have drastically changed as a result of the pandemic. It is still unclear how this new professional reality will affect the voices of teachers at various education levels. A review including 313 college teachers showed that the mental pressure encompassing the progress to on the web, coordinated showing has been related with elevated degrees of vocal side effects. Prior to the pandemic, specialists attempted to comprehend the communicative needs of teachers and the factors associated with dysphonia, as well as to develop interventions that would assist teachers in using their voices. The world is going through a strange time, and even more effort is needed. During the pandemic, this study sought to examine the vocal self-perception of Brazilian teachers from various educational levels and regions, as well as their communication requirements, vocal signs and symptoms, and voice-related lifestyles. We propose emergency support materials for these teachers and the community as a whole based on this preliminary data [3].

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on every aspect of

our lives, including education. Teachers have faced unprecedented challenges in adapting to remote learning, hybrid classrooms, and constantly changing health and safety guidelines. Amidst these challenges, one crucial aspect that often goes unnoticed is the impact of the pandemic on the teacher's voice and communication abilities. The teacher's voice is their primary tool for delivering lessons, engaging with students, and maintaining effective communication in the classroom. However, the shift to online teaching and the use of masks in physical classrooms have presented new obstacles for teachers in terms of voice projection, clarity, and overall communication effectiveness. Moreover, the pandemic has also heightened self-perception issues among teachers regarding their voice and communication abilities. The increased use of video conferencing platforms and recorded lessons has led teachers to critically evaluate their own voices, speech patterns, and nonverbal cues, sometimes leading to self-doubt and a loss of confidence [4].

In this context, the role of speech therapy becomes paramount in helping teachers navigate these challenges and regain their confidence and communication skills. Speech therapists can provide valuable guidance and interventions to address voice-related issues, improve speech clarity, enhance vocal projection, and teach effective communication strategies tailored to the unique circumstances of online and hybrid teaching. By addressing the self-perception concerns and providing targeted speech therapy interventions, teachers can not only regain their confidence but also enhance their overall teaching effectiveness. A strong, clear, and confident voice plays a crucial role in capturing students' attention, conveying information effectively, and fostering a positive learning environment [5].

This article aims to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the teacher's voice and communication abilities, delve into the self-perception challenges faced by teachers, and highlight the significant contributions that speech therapy can make in supporting teachers during these trying times. By acknowledging and addressing the impact of the pandemic on the teacher's voice, we can ensure that educators receive the necessary support to excel in their profession and continue providing high-quality education to their students [6].

Conclusion

Participants reported improved voice when comparing the pre pandemic period to the current one. On the other hand, they showed signs like a dry throat, difficulty using headphones, hoarseness after classes, and difficulty addressing remote classes. They also pointed to stress, general exhaustion, the effect of the pandemic on mental health, and the fact that many household chores overlapped with professional ones. Some smoked, and others did not drink enough water. During the pandemic, teachers generally observed improvements in students'

voices; however, some teachers perceived voices as getting worse. Many of them listed a number of ways that speech-language pathologists could help them improve their performance and comfort in hybrid and remote classes, which will improve not only their voice and communication but also their quality of life.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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How to cite this article: Zenari, Marcia. "COVID-19 and the Teacher's Voice: Self-Perception, the Role of Speech Therapy in Voice and Communication." *Telecommun Syst Manage* 12 (2023): 377.