

FOREWORD

It has now been ten years since the clinical management of individuals with dysphagia was formally placed within the scope of practice of speech-language pathology by the Legislative Council of the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association. And five years have passed since an issue of *Seminars in Speech and Language* was devoted to the evaluation and treatment of adults with swallowing disorders. During this period, also, videofluoroscopic swallowing examinations have become the primary revenue-generating procedure and clinical activity of many speech-language pathologists employed in hospitals and other health care facilities. Much has been learned and published about dysphagia, its underlying impairments, and complicating conditions during this period, as well.

As a profession's scope of practice expands and as knowledge about the clinical populations encompassed by that scope increases, the inevitable result is a need for special knowledge, skill, and experience with these related but different clinical populations as well as the need for clinicians to specialize. It has taken less than a decade for this to occur in the area of swallowing disorders, and without appropriate continuing education, clinicians are likely to find their scope of competence gradually diminishing. A primary goal of *Seminars in Speech and Language* is to

provide clinicians with information on topics of current significance to help them stay abreast of important advances in the field. It seems both timely and appropriate that the next two issues of *Seminars* examine the assessment and management of pediatric dysphagia.

Our guides for these issues are Dr. Joan Arvedson, Children's Hospital of Buffalo and the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences of the State University of New York at Buffalo, and Dr. Maureen Lefton-Greif, Endowood Division of Pediatric Respiratory Sciences in the Department of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Hospital. A variety of important medical, health, and developmental issues need to be appreciated in order to work effectively with the growing number of infants and children whose oral-pharyngeal dysfunctions adversely affect feeding and breathing. As you will see, these two guest editors have assembled an interdisciplinary team of clinical specialists to help us better understand the challenges posed by this often times fragile group of patients and more knowledgeable about the strategies currently employed to assess and habilitate them. The focus of this first issue is the complex developmental and health concerns of this clinical population.

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