Chronic cough: A laryngeal dysfunction

Chronic cough is a significant medical problem worldwide. The onset is often unknown and the number of treatments tried is often directed at problems of the nasopharynx or gastrointestinal system. The larynx is often overlooked. Non-pulmonary chronic cough may be diagnosed in patients who complain of shortness of breath, choking, and voice disorders. When the larynx is examined, clinicians may observe a normal larynx, inflammation, and/or the presence of paradoxical vocal fold motion. The complaints by the patients may be attributed to clinical observations or they may range from dysphagia, post nasal drip or gastroesophageal reflux disease. Factors such as duration of the condition, time line of which symptom actually came first, and co-occurrence of other conditions make the diagnosis and the treatment a challenge. These factors may include neurological changes, post nasal drip, upper respiratory infections or pulmonary disease. In most cases, the true cause of chronic cough is never identified. Moreover, without a definitive diagnosis, treatment often fails and the patient is left to seek other options or even just simply they live with it. In many cases, patients report partial resolution of the problem and stop seeking treatment. In others, medications help to diminish the problem and the patient is satisfied with partial resolution. All too often, these medications offer short term help but after a period of time the symptoms return. The purpose of the present study was to assess laryngeal function in patients with unresolved chronic cough despite being previously treated.

Biography

Dr. Thomas Murry is Professor of Speech Pathology in Otolaryngology, Department of Otolaryngology, Weill Cornell Medical College. He completed his Ph.D. and post-doctoral research fellowship at the University of Florida. Dr. Murry has distinguished himself as a clinician, scientist, and educator in the areas of voice disorders. His research in voice science encompasses neurolaryngology, outcomes of treatment of singers, performer’s voice disorders, and outcomes of multi-specialty treatments for voice and swallowing problems. Dr. Murry has published over 130 peer-reviewed articles on voice and swallowing in peer-reviewed journals and has presented over 500 lectures at conferences in the United States and throughout the world.

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