The Occupational Therapist's Intervention for Adult Patients with Neurogenic Dysphagia

Abstract of the Thesis:

Dysphagia is a serious disorder, often caused by a cerebrovascular accident; in many cases it may be its only or primary symptom, and even the cause of death.

The main objective of this thesis is to raise awareness of swallowing disorders among occupational therapists. Despite the fact that the occupational therapist's intervention for patients with swallowing disorder is common practice among occupational therapists abroad, this issue still is not well known among occupational therapists in the Czech Republic. There is also a considerable lack of Czech literature dealing with swallowing disorders from the occupational therapy point of view. This thesis therefore not only presents theoretical findings in this field but also recommends practical procedures for occupational therapists.

The theoretical part of the thesis describes functional anatomy of the swallowing structures and swallowing physiology and pathophysiology. It analyses different causes of dysphagia with a focus on neurological disorders, defines the term dysphagia and other related terms, and briefly explains several classification methods of dysphagia. While the first part of the thesis looks primarily into the diagnostics and examination of swallowing disorders, the later chapters explore particular options for therapy, emphasise the importance of interprofessional approach and, last but not least, describe particular steps of the occupational therapist's intervention.

The practical part of the thesis addresses the results of a questionnaire survey conducted among occupational therapists in the Czech Republic. The goal was to find out whether occupational therapists in this country are involved, within the interprofessional collaboration, in the treatment of adult patients with swallowing disorders.

Key Words: ergotherapy, occupational therapy, swallowing, dysphagia, interprofessional approach, interprofessional collaboration, cerebrovascular accident