



Voice rehabilitation telehealth: report experience from university extension action

Teleconsultas em voz: relato de experiência de uma extensão universitária

Tele salud de rehabilitación de voz: informe de experiencia de la acción de extensión universitaria

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Abstract

Telehealth is included in the field of activity of the professional speech therapist and regulated in CFFa resolution nº. 580/2020. In the voice area, positive results were observed in vocal parameters via teleconsultation after the intervention. There is a gap in speech therapy graduation regarding teleconsultations, and this became evident with the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it necessary to carry out this type of service with professionals who had not had theoretical and/or practical experience. **Objective:** To report the experience in creating and developing a university extension action on voice teleconsultations for individuals with vocal complaints. **Methodology:** This is a descriptive study of the experience report type developed in an extension project. Students and teachers structured, developed, and applied a step-by-step guide for carrying out teleconsultations to deal with cases of behavioral dysphonia with the CVRP (Comprehensive Vocal Rehabilitation Program). **Results:** The teleconsultation project promoted the experience of a new practice in speech therapy for students, in addition to notions of outpatient organization, protocols to be followed, flow of care, feedback, referrals, and rules of virtual care. Twelve dysphonic individuals were included in the telehealth project. **Conclusion:** The remote activity experience brought positive gains for the students, aiming for a new care practice, with instructions

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Authors' contributions:

NSN: idea developer, project writing, data collection;

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and training based on ethics and patient care and from a care point of view with improvement in vocal quality and vocal self-assessment of patients seen via teleconsultation.

Keywords: Voice; Speech Therapy; Education; Telehealth; Dysphonia.

Resumo

Introdução: a telefonoaudiologia está inserida no campo de atuação do profissional fonoaudiólogo e regulamentada na resolução CFFa nº. 580/2020. Na área de voz observa-se resultados positivos nos parâmetros vocais após a intervenção por teleconsulta. Há uma deficiência na formação fonoaudiológica quanto a teleconsultas e isso ficou evidenciando com a pandemia da COVID-19 em que foi necessário realizar essa modalidade de atendimento com profissionais que não haviam tido experiência teórica e/ou prática. **Objetivo:** relatar a experiência na criação e desenvolvimento de uma ação de extensão universitária sobre teleconsultas em voz a indivíduos com queixa vocal. **Metodologia:** trata-se de um estudo descritivo, do tipo relato de experiência, desenvolvido em um projeto de extensão em que discentes e docentes estruturaram, elaboraram e aplicaram um passo a passo para realização de teleconsultas para atender casos de disfonia comportamental com o PIRV (Programa Integral de Reabilitação Vocal). **Resultados:** o projeto de teleconsulta promoveu a vivência de uma nova prática na Fonoaudiologia aos discentes, além de noções de organização de ambulatório, protocolos a serem seguidos, fluxo de atendimentos, devolutivas, encaminhamentos e regras do atendimento virtual. Doze indivíduos disfônicos foram contemplados com o projeto de teleconsultas **Conclusão:** a atividade remota vivenciada trouxe ganhos positivos para os discentes visando uma nova prática de atendimento, com instruções e capacitações baseadas na ética e no cuidado ao paciente e do ponto de vista assistencial com melhora na qualidade vocal e na autoavaliação vocal dos pacientes atendidos via teleconsulta.

Palavras-chave: Voz; Fonoaudiologia; Educação; Telessaúde; Disfonia.

Resumen

La telesalud está incluida en el campo de actividad del profesional logopeda y regulada en la resolución CFFa nº. 580/2020. En el área de la voz se observaron resultados positivos en los parámetros vocales mediante teleconsulta posterior a la intervención. Existe un vacío en la graduación de logopedia respecto a las teleconsultas, y esto se hizo evidente con la pandemia de COVID-19, que obligó a realizar este tipo de servicio con profesionales que no habían tenido experiencia teórica y/o práctica. **Objetivo:** Informar la experiencia en la creación y desarrollo de una acción de extensión universitaria sobre teleconsultas de voz para personas con quejas vocales. **Metodología:** Se trata de un estudio descriptivo del tipo relato de experiencia desarrollado en un proyecto de extensión. Estudiantes y docentes estructuraron, desarrollaron y aplicaron una guía paso a paso para la realización de teleconsultas para atender casos de disfonía conductual con el IVRP (Programa Intensivo de Rehabilitación Vocal). **Resultados:** El proyecto de teleconsulta promovió la experiencia de una nueva práctica en logopedia para estudiantes, además de nociones de organización ambulatoria, protocolos a seguir, flujo de atención, retroalimentación, derivaciones y reglas de la atención virtual. Se incluyeron doce personas disfónicas en el proyecto de telesalud. **Conclusión:** La experiencia de actividad remota trajo beneficios positivos para los estudiantes, apuntando a una nueva práctica de atención, con instrucciones y capacitación basada en la ética y la atención al paciente y desde el punto de vista asistencial con mejora en la calidad vocal y la autoevaluación vocal de los pacientes atendidos. vía teleconsulta.

Palabras clave: Voz; Logopedia; Educación; Telesalud; Disfonía.



Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have played a pivotal role in fostering the development of Telehealth, effectively overcoming geographical barriers and significantly enhancing the quality and accessibility of healthcare services¹.

The term “telefonoaudiology” refers to the practice of speech and language pathology therapy through telehealth and is regulated by Resolution CFFa Nº 580/2020². It focuses on health promotion, prevention, identification, evaluation, diagnosis, intervention, and voice improvement using ICTs³.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions on in-person speech therapy prompted the widespread adoption of telefonoaudiology. The Brazilian Society of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (Sociedade Brasileira de Fonoaudiologia) provided training, and the Federal Council of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (Conselho Federal de Fonoaudiologia) disseminated guidelines for best telefonoaudiology practices³. Telefonoaudiology can be conducted synchronously (real-time interaction), asynchronously (via messaging or instructions), hybrid (combining both), or automatically (data recording)³.

Studies have shown telefonoaudiology to be as effective as in-person therapy for voice treatment, consistently yielding positive outcomes in self-perception of voice, maximum phonation time, auditory perceptual judgment, acoustic measures, and user satisfaction 4,5. This robust evidence of telefonoaudiology’s effectiveness should reassure and instill confidence in its potential to improve voice treatment outcomes. Dysphonia, defined as a voice disorder hindering natural vocal production, includes behavioral dysphonias per Behlau’s classification, addressing vocal misuse and now termed behavioral dysphonias⁶.

Vocal therapy for behavioral dysphonias may involve various strategies and therapeutic programs, such as the Comprehensive Voice Rehabilitation Program (PIRV, in Portuguese), which encompasses holistic approaches and specific exercises targeting vocal disorders. PIRV integrates bodywork, glottic source, resonance, and

pneumophonic coordination, emphasizing vocal hygiene and communication attitudes. Studies confirm PIRV’s effectiveness in treating behavioral dysphonias in in-person settings⁷⁻⁹.

Scientific evidence supporting speech therapy via teleconsultation is crucial for evaluating the benefits of this clinical model. A recent study highlighted the need to integrate telehealth topics into speech-language pathology graduate curriculum, as many professionals lacked telefonoaudiology experience before the pandemic¹⁰. A survey in Bahia State revealed that 87.5% of speech-language pathologists lacked telehealth training during their undergraduate studies, underscoring the necessity of curriculum updates¹¹.

This study aims to report on the development and implementation of a university extension project focused on teleconsultations for individuals with vocal complaints.

Method

This descriptive study presents an experiential report.

Establishment and Development of the Voice Teleconsultation Outpatient Clinic

Initially, a literature review on telehealth practices in speech-language pathology was conducted, emphasizing Resolution No. 580/2020 and “Guidelines for Good Practices in Telefonoaudiology”. Collaborating with speech-language pathology extension students, meetings were held to develop a teleconsultation workflow (Figure 1), and the research project was submitted and approved by the Research Ethics Committee under protocol nº 5.250.760.

Google Classroom® facilitated the organization and access to necessary tools exclusively for involved students, including anamnesis and clinical evaluation protocols, voice recording, self-perception instruments, patient motivational phrases, and registration forms for potential patients. Google Meet® served as the designated platform within the university’s infrastructure.



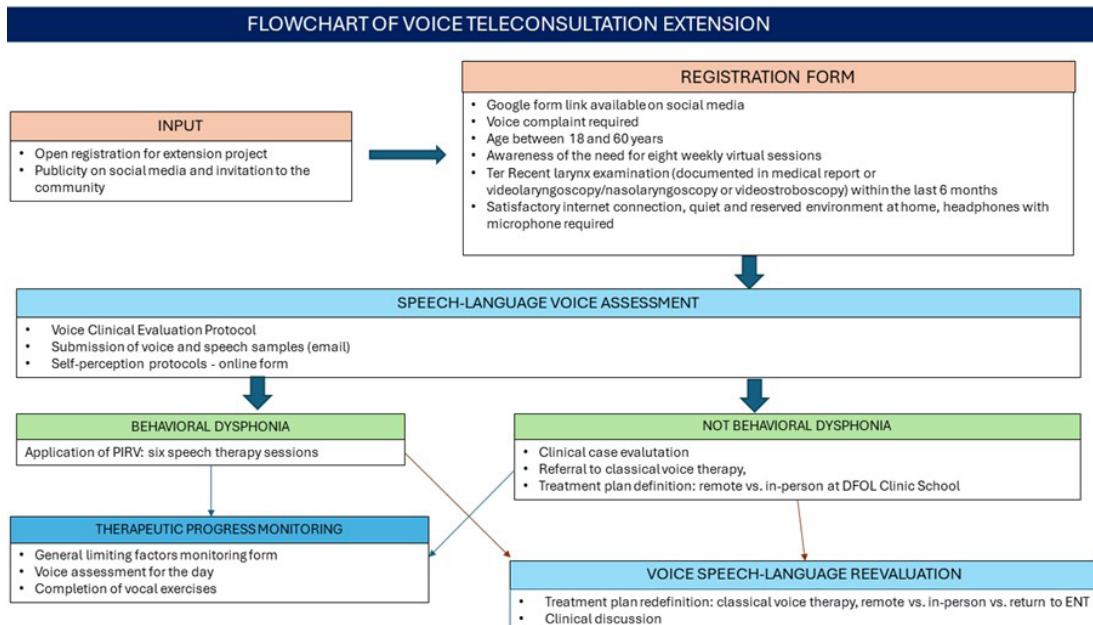


Figure 1. Flowchart of voice Teleconsultation extension

Project registration forms were publicized on social media and university websites, requiring candidates to attach a recent laryngoscopy report. Candidates electronically consented to participate and authorized image and voice use for academic purposes. Eligible candidates included those aged 18–60, with vocal complaints, disponibility of ten sessions, recent ENT reports, stable internet, a quiet environment, and a headset with a microphone. Candidates not meeting voice-specific criteria were excluded.

Upon reviewing the criteria, candidates underwent an online clinical assessment and completed vocal self-perception protocols via electronic forms. Candidates also submitted voice samples (e.g., sustained /a/ vowel emissions, counting 1 to 11, CAPE-V phrases) via email. Assessments included resonance type, dynamic respiratory pat-

tern, vocal attack, and pneumophonoarticulatory coordination (adequate/inadequate).

Participants diagnosed with behavioral dysphonias (with or without lesions) underwent the PIRV via teleconsultation. Non-behavioral dysphonias were assessed, and those unsuitable for remote treatment were referred to the university's speech clinic.

Patients engaged weekly with exercise monitoring forms and motivational messages for enhanced project participation.

2. Training and Development of Teleconsultation by Speech-Language Pathology Students:

The project involved collaboration with the Voice Academic League (LaVOZ), selecting students from all academic years. Each student's role aligned with their academic progression (Chart 1).



**Chart 1.** Distribution of Student Activities in the Voice Teleconsultation Project

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3* Year 4
Secretaries	Assistants	Therapists
Management of the waiting list	Assisting in the organization of clinical appointments	Organization of clinical appointments
Patient scheduling	Checking responses to forms	Checking responses to forms
Sending motivational messages	Verifying the submission of voice samples via email	Verifying the submission of voice samples via email
Sending monitoring and self-perception forms	Assisting with the clinical progression of patients in electronic health records	Responsible for the clinical progression of patients in electronic health records
Observing teleconsultations	Observing teleconsultations	Conducting teleconsultations

*After completing the Voice module in the undergraduate curriculum.

Students participated in five three-hour virtual training sessions before project initiation, simulating form applications and teleconsultation procedures under faculty supervision.

straints, four did not fully adhere to the proposed treatment, and five completed PIRV rehabilitation via teleconsultation. Participants, aged 24–50, were diagnosed with behavioral dysphonias (Table 1).

Voice samples underwent double-blind perceptual evaluation using the GRBASI scale by experienced speech-language pathologists, achieving 100% agreement. Pre-intervention vocal parameters are detailed in Table 2, showing improved Quality of Vocal Life and decreased VHI-10 across all participants.

PIRV via teleconsultation improved vocal quality for all participants, as shown in Table 3.

Results

1. Vocal Outcomes from the Comprehensive Voice Rehabilitation Program (PIRV) Participants:

Twelve individuals participated; three required in-person clinic referrals due to technological con-

Table 1. Characterization of the Sample Undergoing Rehabilitation through PIRV via Teleconsultations.

Participant	Gender	Age	Occupation	Educational Level	ENT Report
FT	F	37	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Deviated septum, Cyst on the right vocal fold, edema, Gastroesophageal reflux;
ML	F	50	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Behavioral dysphonia
LC	F	24	Advertising professional	Bachelor's Degree	Normal larynx
DJ	M	38	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Normal larynx
JS	M	38	Musician	Bachelor's Degree	Normal larynx



**Table 2.** Pre-Rehabilitation Vocal Results through PIRV via Teleconsultations

Participant	G	R	B	A	S	I	Pitch	Loudness	Resonance	CPFA	Vocal Attack	Articulation			
FT	2	2	0	0	1	1	Low	Strong	Laryngopharyngeal	Adequate	Abrupt	Precise/normal			
ML	1	0	0	0	0	1	Adequate	Adequate	Laryngopharyngeal	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
LC	2	0	1	0	0	2	Adequate	Adequate	Normal	Inadequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
DJ	1	1	0	0	1	1	Adequate	Adequate	Hypernasal	Adequate	Isochronic	Indistinct/ imprecise			
JS	1	1	0	0	0	0	Adequate	Adequate	Balanced	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
Participant	Vocal Resistance						Breathing Mode	Breathing Type	Speech Rate	TMF /a/	Avg Max Time /s/	Avg Max Time /z/	s/z Ratio	QVV	IDV-10
FT	Reports of fatigue/muscle tension						Nasal	Costodiaphragmatic	Adequate	8,22	9,8	9,1	1,07	72,5	8
ML	Reports of fatigue/muscle tension						Nasal	Thoracic/medium	Adequate	14,66	13	14,66	0,88	30	23
LC	Reports of fatigue/muscle tension						Buccal-nasal	Thoracic/medium	Adequate	7,1	7,3	7,9	0,92	75	11
DJ	Reports of fatigue/muscle tension						Buccal-nasal	Abdominal/lower	Adequate	15	9	10	0,9	85	3
JS	Resistant						Nasal	Costodiaphragmatic	Adequate	30,52	16,75	18,85	0,88	85	7

Table 3. Post-Rehabilitation Vocal Results through PIRV via Teleconsultations.

Participant	G	R	B	A	S	I	Pitch	Loudness	Resonance	CPFA	Vocal Attack	Articulation			
FT	1	1	1	0	0	0	Adequate	Adequate	Normal	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
ML	1	0	0	0	0	1	Adequate	Adequate	Normal	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
LC	1	0	0	0	0	1	Adequate	Adequate	Normal	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
DJ	1	1	0	0	0	0	Adequate	Adequate	Normal	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
JS	0	0	0	0	0	0	Adequate	Adequate	Balanced	Adequate	Isochronic	Precise/normal			
Participant	Vocal Resistance						Breathing Mode	Breathing Type	TMF /a/	Avg Max Time /s/	Avg Max Time /z/	s/z Ratio	QVV	IDV-10	IDV-10
FT	Resistant						Nasal	Abdominal/lower	11,77	10,61	12,31	0,83	97,5	0	8
ML	Resistant						Nasal	Thoracic/medium	16,33	14	15	0,93	45	22	23
LC	Reports of fatigue/muscle tension						Buccal-nasal	Abdominal/lower	14,43	9,62	9,71	0,99	87,5	8	11
DJ	Resistant						Nasal	Abdominal/lower	17	15	13	1,1	100	0	3
JS	Resistant						Nasal	Costodiaphragmatic	41,27	38,5	37,2	1,03	975	0	7

2. Results from Speech-Language Pathology Student Interventions:

Nine speech-language pathology students engaged in active teaching methods, developing online clinical case forms, digital vocal guidance, motivational phrases, and teleconsultation workflows.

Discussion

Voice professionals often seek clinical care due to vocal misuse, with interventions ranging from individual to group settings^{12,13}. This study demonstrated vocal parameters in individuals with behavioral dysphonias treated remotely using PIRV⁷. Teleconsultation benefits include improved

healthcare access, reduced wait times, and flexible scheduling for clients/patients, although physical assessments like head and neck muscle tension and respiratory type pose challenges^{15,17}.

Studies support PIRV's effectiveness in treating behavioral dysphonias in face-to-face settings⁸, obtaining positive outcomes in VHI-10 and MPT, also observed in this study⁹. Telefonoaudiology studies show promising outcomes but lack comprehensive methodologies and larger samples for definitive effectiveness^{3,19}. Future randomized controlled trials comparing telefonoaudiology and in-person PIRV outcomes are warranted.

The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted telefonoaudiology's role, emphasizing continuous professional development in digital tools². For





educational and extension purposes, student exposure to telepractice enhances future professionals' skills and engagement in remote speech therapy.

Conclusions

This study detailed the initiation of a telefonoaudiology extension project, highlighting innovative speech therapy practices. Academic extension illuminates the need for ongoing research to refine telefonoaudiology's application, promoting ethical patient care. The project significantly improved participants' vocal quality of life via PIRV teleconsultation, enriching student experiences within academia.

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