

## Dysphagia Screening Adherence in the ED: Impact of a Nurse Champion

### Abstract

Unrecognized dysphagia among stroke patients can cause complications, including aspiration and healthcare acquired pneumonia. A pilot study to test if dysphagia screening adherence was influenced by the implementation of a nurse champion was conducted at one of three free standing emergency departments (FSEDs) affiliated with a large, Midwest, urban, teaching, and ‘thrombectomy capable’ stroke certified center. This quality improvement project utilized May and Finch’s Normalization Process Theory as the theoretical framework with the DNP student acting as champion. Participants included full, part-time, and per diem RNs in the FSED (N=22). After implementation of the nurse champion, bedside screening overall adherence improved from 18% to 36%, which demonstrated a statistically significant change ( $p<.03$ ). Conclusion: Utilization of a nurse champion in a FSED is a novel approach to ensure high quality care by closing the gap between evidence and practice. This pilot study reinforces previous work regarding implementation of unit-based champions to advance specific evidence-based clinical practice guidelines.

*Keywords:* Evidence-based practice, champion, clinical practice guidelines, opinion leader, quality improvement, staff nurse education