

PREVALENCE AND RISK FACTORS FOR VOICE PROBLEMS IN PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND SINGERS

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Background. Among the occupations, which include a greater amount of voice load and at the same time a requirement for good voice quality, there are singers and actors. The purpose of the study was to determine how frequent the voice problems occur among professional actors and singers. We also investigated the potential causes for voice problems.

Methodology. 65 professional actors, 63 professional singers from professional theatres and choirs, who were examined at The Centre for Voice, Speech and Swallowing Disorders, University Department of ORL and HNS in Ljubljana in the period 2011- 2014 were included in our study. The data about voice problems and their possible causes were obtained with a questionnaire. For the data on medical history and findings of phoniatic and/or speech therapist's examination and the results of the acoustic and aerodynamic analysis of their voice samples were taken from the medical documentation of the examined candidates.

The results. The professional actors displayed more inappropriate voice and speech patterns than the professional solo singers. Professional actors also had more risk factors which had a negative effect on their voice, they had significantly more inappropriate voice habits, LPR and higher frequency of voice problems. Very important risk factors turned out to be loud speech and the presence of allergies. More than one half of the group of professional actors were smokers.

Conclusions. The professional actors and singers have insufficient knowledge of a proper voice care. Worse voice behaviour showed actors, whose percentage of inappropriate speech and smoking habits was too high for an elite voice user representative. The results confirmed the importance of preventive examinations before the enrolment in drama play and solo singing, therefore only candidates with healthy and efficient voice apparatus could enrol in these study programmes.