

# Changes in the Participation Status of Laryngectomized Patients in a Self-Help Group during the First Year after Hospital Discharge

Kaori Haba <sup>1)</sup>, Kumiko Kotake <sup>1)</sup>, Kazuyo Iwanaga <sup>2)</sup>, Yoshimi Suzukamo <sup>3)</sup>, Ichiro Kai <sup>4)</sup>, Aya Takahashi <sup>5)</sup>  
 Juntendo University, Faculty of Health care and Nursing <sup>1)</sup>, Fukuoka University, School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine <sup>2)</sup>, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation,  
 Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine <sup>3)</sup>, The University of Tokyo <sup>4)</sup>, Saitama Prefectural University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing <sup>5)</sup>

## Objective

The purpose of this study is to elucidate the participation of laryngectomized patients in a self-help group (SHG) during the first year after hospital discharge.

## Methods

- Twenty-four patients who underwent total laryngectomy and consented to participate in the study responded to a questionnaire survey regarding registration and participation in the SHG.
- The questionnaire was administered before and 3, 6, and 12 months after hospital discharge.
- Survey items were basic attributes, self-help group registration and participation status, and reasons for not joining the group.
- The questionnaire sheet for the pre-discharge survey was handed to each patient and collected from the patient before discharge. For the post-discharge survey, they were distributed and returned by mail.
- Basic attributes in the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Registration, participation status, and reasons for nonparticipation in each patient were chronologically listed to look for any changes in participation status and associated factors.
- This study was approved by the Ethics Committees of Juntendo University and the affiliated hospital.

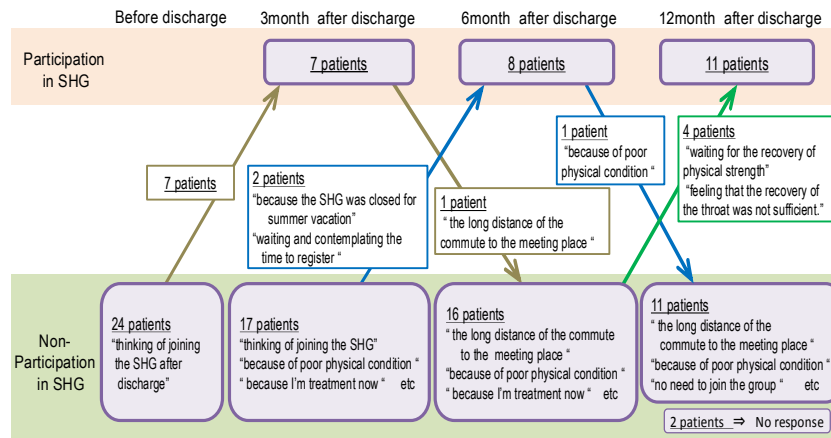


Figure 1. Changes in the Participation Status

	mean (range)	n(%)
Age	61.0 (54 - 76)	
Sex		
Men		20 (83.3)
Women		4 (16.4)
Employment Status		
Employed		8 (33.3)
Unemployed		16 (66.7)
Diagnosis		
Hypopharyngeal cancer		17 (70.8)
Laryngeal cancer		5 (20.8)
No respons		2 (8.4)
Treatment		
Operation only		23(95.8)
Operation & Post operative Radiation		1(4.2)

## Results

- None of the patients were registered with the SHG before hospital discharge.
- Seven patients (29.2%) completed their registration during the 3-month period after discharge and 2 did so during the 3–6-month period.
- Another patient was waiting and contemplating the time to register at postdischarge month 3, was a member of the SHG at postdischarge month 6, but was no longer a member at postdischarge month 12 because of poor physical condition.
- The remaining 4 patients (16.7%) registered with the SHG between 6–12 months after discharge, because to poor physical condition.
- Eleven patients (45.8%) never attended the SHG during the first year after discharge, because they each think "I live alone and don't have opportunities to talk to others", "it's just not in my nature" and "the long distance of the commute to the meeting place".
- On the other side, 8 patients (33.3%) mentioned before discharge that they were "thinking of joining the SHG after discharge as soon as they regain physical strength," showing their intention to join the group, but they had not felt fully recovered and thus had not yet registered with the group.

## Conclusion

In these patients who underwent total laryngectomy, participation status in the SHG during the first year after discharge strongly depended on their physical recovery, regardless of the time during the year. The reason for not yet feeling fully recovered despite the passage of time after the surgery and the stabilized incision site may involve eating and swallowing difficulties, which take up all their physical strength, and the adverse effects of postoperative chemotherapy. To support laryngectomized patients who are willing to join the SHG, it is important to develop a continuous support system that meets the physical needs of individual patients. Although acquisition of esophageal speech is the major activity provided by SHG in Japan, the findings in this study suggest that the content and methods of the current activities should be reviewed to meet the wide range of needs that laryngectomized patients develop after hospital discharge.