

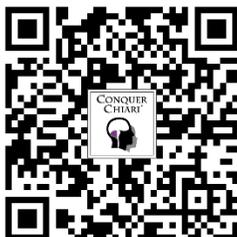
Tonsillar Herniation Found In 6% Of Children With Persistent Dysphagia

Researchers have reported that tonsillar herniation was found in 6% of children with persistent dysphagia. While previous reports have shown that dysphagia, or trouble swallowing, is common in young children with Chiari; this study started with a broad pool of pediatric dysphagia patients to determine how common Chiari is among this group. The researchers looked at over 10 years of medical records from a single hospital and identified patients who were younger than 20, had dysphagia for more than 6 months, and had had a brain MRI as part of the diagnostic workup.

Using these criteria, they found 150 subjects for the study (83 male, 67 female). The average age at the time of MRI was 3.5 years and interestingly 75% were born prematurely. In addition, 68% required some type of supplemental tube feeding. The MRI's showed that 5 patients had tonsillar herniation that met the traditional definition of Chiari, while another 4 had tonsillar herniation but to a lesser degree. In total 6% of the group had some level of tonsillar herniation.

Surprisingly, there was no significant difference between patients with and without tonsillar herniation in terms of demographics, dysphagia severity, or presence of aspiration (when food or liquids enter the lungs). One limitation of this study is that MRIs were not ordered for each persistent dysphagia patient that was evaluated during that time frame, which can skew the results. Rather, whether an MRI is ordered is not routine but at the discretion of the treating physician. However, the authors believe that their results justify ordering an MRI as part of the diagnostic workup for these cases.

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Source: The prevalence of Chiari malformation among children with persistent dysphagia. Hazkani I, Voyles C, Reddy KM, Alazraki A, Raol N. Am J Otolaryngol. 2023 Apr 4;44(4):103887. doi: 10.1016/j.amjoto.2023.103887. Online ahead of print. PMID: 37058912

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