**The Most Common Voice Disorders**

To understand voice disorders, one should have an idea about the normal physiology of voice production. A normal human being has two sets of vocal cords present in the larynx. In speech production, the air from the lungs passes through the narrow opening between the vocal cords, and the force of the wind causes the vocal cords to vibrate. The vibrating force produces sound waves, and this is how voice production is made possible.

**Voice Disorders**

There are several types of voice disorders caused by different pathologies. The most important ones are described below.

* **Inflammatory Voice Disorders:**

Laryngitis is the inflammation of the larynx caused by a number of factors such as overuse, infection, or irritation of the larynx. It may be acute or chronic.

* **Neurological voice disorders**:

They occur due to underlying neurological condition examples include multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, and muscular dystrophy.

* **Vocal cord paralysis:**

It occurs when nerve impulses supplying the vocal cords are disrupted.

**The Causes**

Voice disorders can be caused by a number of different pathologies, and in some cases, the reason remains unknown. Some of the factors which can cause voice disorders include:

* Growths such as polyps, nodules, or cysts.
* Inflammation and swelling of the vocal cords.
* Hormonal imbalance like thyroid issues which often cause hoarseness of voice.
* Misuse of the voice, often seen in certain professionals such as teachers and singers as they use their voice more frequently compared to an average person.

**The Signs and Symptoms**

Some of the most important indicators of a voice disorder include:

* Hoarseness of voice
* Having a quivering voice
* Vocal fatigue
* Aphonia or voice loss
* Pain while talking
* Sounding strained
* Whispery or breathy voice
* A change in pitch

**Diagnoses of Voice Disorders**

An otolaryngologist can easily identify the voice disorders by observing the quality of voice in addition to an evaluation of signs and symptoms the patient is suffering from. However, to confirm the diagnosis and to identify the cause, the doctor will have to examine the vocal cords and larynx by performing certain tests. These tests include:

* **Laryngoscopy:**

It is an examination that allows the doctor to see the back of the throat, voice box, and vocal cords with the help of a scope called a laryngoscope.

Laryngoscopy is of two types, and each uses the different equipment.

* 1. **Indirect laryngoscopy:**

It is performed by using a small mirror and a headlight to look in the throat.

* 1. **Direct laryngoscopy:**

It helps visualize deeper structures in the throat. It further divided into two subtypes: rigid and flexible. Flexible endoscopes are more comfortable for the patient and show the throat better, whereas the rigid endoscopes are often used in the surgery.

* **Videostroboscopy:**

This procedure is a gold standard in laryngological diagnostic care. In this procedure, strobe light and video camera are used to see how the vocal cords vibrate during speech.

* **Imaging tests:**

Imaging techniques, such as X-rays and MRI are often used for visualizing tissue growth.

**The Treatment**

Treatment depends upon the underlying cause of the condition. It may include:

* Lifestyle changes
* Speech therapy
* Medicine for example in laryngitis to treat the infection
* Surgery to remove tissue growth