

FOREWORD

In November of 1986, the Legislative Council of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) formally adopted a position statement that recognized the role of speech-language pathologists in the clinical management of individuals with dysphagia. Three years later, their position statement on speech-language pathology's scope of practice included a continuum of clinical services for patients with disordered oral-pharyngeal function, whether or not there was a coexisting communication disorder. Thus, within the decade of the 80s, the identification, evaluation, and treatment of dysphagia evolved as a major responsibility of many speech-language pathologists who work in medical and rehabilitation centers. Perhaps that is one reason why dysphagia was one of the most requested topics in our survey of *Seminars*' readers last year.

Much of the information currently available on swallowing problems and the techniques that clinicians need to use with dysphagia patients has resulted from the work of a relatively small cadre of clinicians and researchers. Few college and university speech-language pathology training programs provide more than just a cursory mention of dysphagia, perhaps only a comment or two about the swallowing problems that some dysarthric or oropharyngeal surgery patients may have. As a result, many of the clinicians and researchers who were responsible for obtaining so much of what we know about dysphagia have also had to be responsible for informing and training the rest of us.

One such clinician and researcher is Dr. Barbara Sonies, Chief of the Speech-Language Pathology Section, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, W. G. Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health. As Guest Editor of this issue of *Seminars*, she carefully assembled a group of colleagues whose perspectives and expertise span a broad spectrum of topics on the clinical management of dysphagia. For those of you who indicated that dysphagia is a topic that you wanted covered in *Seminars*, this is it! Enjoy.

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