Singing in Groups for Parkinson's Disease (SING-PD): A Pilot Study of Group Singing Therapy for PD-Related Voice/Speech Disorders

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Parkinson's disease related speech and voice impairment have significant impact on quality of life measures. LSVT-LOUD voice and speech therapy (formerly known as Lee Silverman Voice Therapy) has demonstrated clinical effectiveness, but musically based voice and speech therapy is underexplored as a potentially useful method of rehabilitation. We undertook a pilot, open label study of a group-based singing intervention, consisting of twelve 90-minute weekly sessions led by a voice and speech therapist/singing instructor. The primary outcome measure of vocal loudness as measured by sound pressure level (SPL) during connected speech was not significantly different one week after the intervention or at 13 weeks after the intervention. A number of secondary measures reflecting pitch range, phonation time and maximum loudness also were unchanged. Voice-related quality of life (VRQOL) and voice handicap index (VHI) also were unchanged. This study suggests that a group singing therapy intervention at this intensity and frequency does not result in significant improvement in objective and subject-rated measures of voice and speech impairment.