

## **A META ANALYTIC REVIEW OF PATIENTS WITH VOICE DISORDERS**

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This paper has been an attempt at a meta-analytic study on the distribution of voice disorders documented from studies around the world. The demographic data obtained from these studies were compared to one already done on the Malaysian population. The aim was to describe the similarities and variability of the patient profiles with voice disorders between the Malaysian and international studies. Relevant data were selected from either manual or electronic searches of 30 journal articles related to voice disorder. The profiles studied included age, gender, occupation and vocal pathologies. All researchers found that females form the majority of voice patients, certain pathologies have higher percentage for a particular gender. Pathologies such as abnormal growth and carcinoma are predominant among males and pathologies such as vocal fold nodules and laryngitis are more common in females. These may be related to social and occupational behaviours that generally differ between genders. In females, additional factors such as structure and geometry of the larynx may further contribute to the higher risk of developing voice disorders. The results also reflect a higher number of patients among older age groups with paralytic causes of voice disorders. This could be contributed by a decreased ability to control laryngeal function due to neurological problems common in this age group. Certain occupations are seen to be more predisposed to voice problems. Among the higher risk groups are retirees and teachers. Although there are peculiar variabilities between patient profiles collected from the Malaysian study and international studies, generally they agree in terms of age, gender and occupation as the main factors contributing to different voice disorders. More studies are needed to further understand the voice profiles among the population. These studies are important in order to improve planning and management resources in the public and educational institutions.

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