

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TONGUE TEST IN FAMILY HEALTH UNITS: INTEGRATION OF SERVICES FOR ATTENTION AND CARE FOR BABIES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PAUDALHO IN THE STATE OF PERNAMBUCO IN 2018

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Abstract: The Tongue Test is a standardized exam that makes it possible to diagnose and indicate early treatment for limitations in tongue movement caused by a tongue tie that can compromise the functions performed by the tongue such as: sucking, swallowing, chewing and speaking. The protocol for evaluating the lingual frenulum in babies is often ignored by health professionals. The change occurs when a small portion of tissue, which must have disappeared during pregnancy, remains below the tongue, limiting movement. Research proves the importance of early diagnosis and intervention of the change. In Brazil, Law number: 13,002, of 06/20/2014, requires the carrying out of the tongue frenulum evaluation protocol in babies, in all hospitals and maternity wards. In Paudalho, the primary care protocol has been implemented since January 2018, considering the importance of carrying out the procedure, preferably, in the first month of life. Initially implemented in 03 USF and gradually expanded. The children were evaluated by Dental Surgeons (CD) in the Family Health Units, articulated and integrated into the Specialties Center (CE). Suspected cases were referred to a speech therapist for a second opinion, at the CE, according to the Martinelli protocol. After confirmation, the children were scheduled for the reference USF DC to perform the surgical procedure. With this implementation project in the city of Paudalho, it was possible to implement it in other municipalities in the state of Pernambuco, decentralizing demand to Basic Units and increasing service capacity throughout the state.

Keywords: tongue test; family health unit; babies.

INTRODUCTION

The tongue test, or tongue test, consists of a standardized procedure that allows early identification and referral for treatment of limitations in tongue movements associated with ankyloglossia. These restrictions can affect essential functions of the tongue, such as sucking, swallowing, chewing and speaking. During her master's degree at the Bauru School of Dentistry at ``*Universidade de São Paulo*`` , speech therapist Roberta Lopes de Castro Martinelli developed a protocol for evaluating the lingual frenulum for babies. This protocol has the ability to identify possible limitations in tongue movements, which play a crucial role in activities such as sucking, chewing, swallowing and speaking.

International studies have confirmed the importance of early diagnosis and intervention in cases of changes in the lingual frenulum. With the approval of this legislation, Brazil becomes the pioneer in the mandatory implementation of this test in all maternity hospitals, which expands the possibilities of action for health professionals and brings significant benefits to the population.

According to Brookes and Bowley, babies with tongue changes may have difficulty sucking, which can affect both the baby and the mother. The most common problems include difficulties in latching on (including signs of frustration, such as shaking the head), pain in the mother's breast (including bleeding, cracked or ulcerated nipples) and signs of dissatisfaction on the part of the baby, such as frequent or continuous breastfeeding, usually with agitation. Francis et al. also report that there is a hypothesis that ankyloglossia interferes with the baby's latching on to the mother's nipple and, therefore, leads to difficulty breastfeeding. After performing the frenotomy, improvements were observed immediately, after surgery and in the first 24 and 72 hours.

GOALS

To carry out diagnosis using the tongue frenulum evaluation protocol in babies (tongue test), aiming at the early detection and treatment of existing cases in the areas of the Family Health Units – USF, decentralizing the intervention to basic health care in the municipalities.

METHODOLOGY

Dental Surgeons (CD) were trained in the Project: `` *Língua Solta* `` – UFPE-Odonto in January/2018 with a workload of 12 hours, whose topics covered were: tongue test concept, lingual frenulum evaluation protocol with scores for babies and Clinical-Surgical practice. The protocol was initially implemented in 03 USF and was gradually expanded. The children were evaluated by the CDs at the USFs, articulated and integrated into the Specialties Center (CE). Suspected cases were referred to a speech therapist for a second opinion, at the CE, according to the Martinelli protocol. After confirmation, the children were scheduled for the reference USF DC to perform the surgical procedure. The Martinelli protocol is divided into clinical history, anatomo functional assessment and assessment of non-nutritive and nutritive sucking, having independent scores and can be applied in parts, until the 6th month of life. The children after the procedure continued to be monitored.

RESULTS

In 2018, 468 small tongue tests were carried out on children under 6 months of age in the municipality of Paudalho and, of these, 107 (22%) showed changes compatible with treatment with oral surgery. All underwent evaluation with retest 30 days after the surgical procedure to compare results and reevaluate changes in nipple grip, sucking and other tongue functions.



CONCLUSION

We assessed that the activity can be carried out based on the training of professionals from the Family Health Units - USF, considering that the implementation of the tongue test is of fundamental importance for child care and can be adopted as care in primary care.

With this implementation project in the city of Paudalho, it was possible to implement it in other municipalities in the state of Pernambuco, decentralizing the demand to the Basic Units, increasing the service capacity, making the intervention more effective, being carried out early and providing a better quality of life for babies and their families.

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