

Introduction

Welcome to a small but significant story about today's medical-drug-industrial complex: How the scientific community, including, well-intentioned physicians, drug researchers, non-profit organizations, journals, and, yes, daily newspapers, all participate in a conspiracy to deny the existence of cures for a dreaded voice disorder called spasmodic dysphonia, also called "strangled voice" or SD.

I've been a speech pathologist for 45 years, having received my Ph.D. in Speech Pathology at UCLA in 1964. In 1957, I had received my Masters in Speech and Speech Pathology at Indiana University. I then attended Stanford University for additional training, eventually directing their adult stutterers' group. I was privileged to work with Dr. Virgil Anderson who taught me that the complex phenomenon of the human voice could be reduced to very simple variables, namely, pitch, tone focus and breath support. While Anderson was simplifying voice training, the speech field and medical community were focused on psychiatric causes and, a little later, neurological explanations.

When I refused to wear a tweed jacket, I left for UCLA where I had no idea I had to wear a suit and tie. At UCLA, I learned that my mentor Anderson was essentially correct that most voice disorders were a mechanical or functional breakdown of pitch, tone focus and breath support. After leaving UCLA in 1968 for private practice, I found a cure for the most terrifying of all voice disorders, spasmodic dysphonia. Since the condition was first described in 1871, the medical community has not had a single cure of this disabling condition. For 90 years, the medical voice field insisted that the strangled voice was a psychiatric disorder. Around 1960, the field changed directions to the current neurological and molecular cause of spasmodic dysphonia.

When I cured my first SD patient with my non-medical technique called Direct Voice Rehabilitation in 1971, the medical field continued treating psychiatric and eventually neurological causes. My findings were published in a chapter in the Travis Handbook of Speech Pathology

and Audiology, considered the number-one, most highly regarded handbook on speech pathology and audiology. In my chapter, I reported my first cure of spasmodic dysphonia and detailed my approach to treating a wide variety of common voice problems. Dr. Lee Travis, one of the five founders of the American Speech and Hearing Association, called me “the best in the voice business,” acknowledging my non-medical approach to voice rehabilitation.

In 1980, I reported nine more cures of spasmodic dysphonia in Washington, DC at the 18th Congress of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics. This peer-reviewed report, which was published in the Proceedings of the Association, describes my nine new cures of the strangled voice, a condition so puzzling, so baffling, so frustrating, that it had stymied the medical voice field since 1871. Much to my surprise, there was little or no response from the medical or speech pathology community. They were only interested in neurological cures.

Around 1984, the voice field was revolutionized by a little known neurologist named Mitchell F. Brin who introduced Botox [botulinum toxin] for treating spasmodic dysphonia. Since then, the voice field has been dominated by a cadre of physicians that routinely prescribe Botox for treating the strangled voice. Despite medical promises that Botox is 99% effective in treating spasmodic dysphonia, my clinical experience says otherwise. Hundreds of patients in my clinical practice have reported that Botox was ineffective in treating the strangled voice. Some report short-term improvements but most report that Botox hasn't helped at all. My patients usually have usually tried and failed at Botox, vocal cord surgery or speech therapy.

Countless patients suffering spasmodic dysphonia are not given a fair choice of treatment. My cures of SD have been well-documented for over 35 years. Join me on a road not taken by the medical profession for cures of hopeless voices and desperate people; you'll get a clear picture of the forces preventing cures from seeing the light of day when cures conflict with powerful commercial interests of publicly traded drug companies and the clever ways they market drugs.