

# Vocal Hygiene Awareness Program in Choir Singers

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## INTRODUCTION

Voice is a powerful tool that not only delivers message but also adds to its meaning. Voice is the important instrument through which an individual personality is projected and compatriots are influenced (Sataloff,2006).

Voice is the laryngeal modification of the pulmonary airstream which is further modified by the configuration of vocal tract. An individual who needs their voice to carry out their job is considered as professional voice users. Professional voice users are also considered athletic voice users because their voice use is more extensive and strenuous than that of nonprofessional voice users. "Professional voice users are those who directly depend on vocal communication for their livelihood" (Stemple,1995).

Voice is a potent, effective and artistic tool for communication. Voice can convey not only sophisticated scholarly concepts, but also fine emotional nuances. Voice is the primary instrument through which an individual personality is projected and compatriots are influenced (Sataloff,2006)

Professional voice users are not only singers and actors, but also attorneys, politicians, clergy, educators and telephone receptionists (Sataloff, 1991). Professional voice user are at risk than the normal speakers for disorders produced by abuse or by inefficient use of the speech production system

Choir singing is one of the traditional ways of singing through vocal music performed largely at religious places, schools and community by a group of untrained singers who learn singing through observation and feedback from fellow singers. They are semi professional voice users. Prevalence of voice disorders seen in choir singers is similar to the prevalence rate among professional voice users. Typically, they are at significant risk for vocal fatigue because they practice abusive behaviors. Through a survey of female university voice students choir singers with a vocally demanding profession were

almost twice as likely to report several frequently occurring vocal symptoms. Deviant voice qualities, inability to sustain phonation, vocal fatigue, pain during phonation and throat irritation are the common vocal symptoms seen. Saphh concluded that certain vocally abusive behaviors, including talking/singing excessively loud, and/or in a low pitch were significant if not the primary causes of voice problems among singers.

Vocal hygiene education program is an effective method to create awareness, reduce vocal abuse and prevent onset and progression of voice problems among choir singers and other professional voice users. It is a behavioural approach to treat voice disorders. Awareness on Vocal Hygiene Programs should be an essential part on the life of professional voice users which will uplift the quality of life by preventing the voice disorders. Timmermans, Bodt, Wuyts and Heyning (2003) demonstrated the necessity of vocal hygiene education programs in radio professionals as they seemed to underestimate the negative implications of bad vocal hygiene. Overall, this study is aimed to analyse the awareness vocal hygiene program in choir singers.

Bernadettea, Jan and Marc (2005) studied the outcome of vocal hygiene in singers. Research on vocal hygiene is specific, focusing on concrete solutions. It has commonly been believed that hydration and vocal rest are beneficial; recent research proves this supposition. An exhaustive medical diagnosis and careful therapy is stressed to detect and treat any micro- organic lesions caused by reflux, infection, allergy, and environmental circumstances, which can harm a singer's voice. The use of medication is reviewed, and side effect are evaluated.

Sharma, Nayak and Devadas (2021) did a survey on vocal health in 148 church choir singers Eighty-four percent of the choir singers reported two or more vocal symptoms sometimes or more frequently while or after singing. More than half of the church choir singers had experienced vocal symptoms such as accessing notes

in the upper range, loss of vocal endurance, pitch breaks, hoarseness, dryness in the throat, and discomfort in the throat. Among the different variables, systemic hydration found to have a significant association with reporting of voice problems in church choir singers. The overall knowledge regarding the factors influencing vocal health was found to be limited

Nair, Joshi and Gunjawate (2021) explored the knowledge, attitudes, and practices among 100 Indian Carnatic singers towards vocal health care. The result reveals that the singers displayed good knowledge and positive attitudes towards vocal health care. A preference (73%) towards home remedies was noted as compared to seeking medical attention. The measures reported by the singers for maintaining good vocal health revealed use of several home remedies, vocal as well as non-vocal measures.

Ravell and Simberg (2018) investigated the prevalence of vocally harmful behaviours, in 350 choir singers. And results showed that choir singers with vocally demanding profession reported several frequently occurring symptoms with significant relation with number of other health related risk factors. Overall voice knowledge among choir singers seemed limited.

Tepe, Deutsch, Sampson, Reilly and Sataloff (2002) determined vocal problems in young choir singers and to correlate vocal problems with demographic and behavioural information. A questionnaire on vocal habits and hygiene was given in 571 young choir singers and results showed that voice difficulties i.e chronic fatigue, hoarseness are common among young singers. Choral conductors must be given choral educational strategies to develop the incidence of voice disorders.

Lawrence, Treole, McCabe, Allen and Toppin (1997) determined effects of vocal hygiene education on vocal hygiene behaviours and perceptual vocal characteristics of untrained singers in 11 untrained singers and results showed that minimal changes in vocal hygiene behaviours and perceptual voice characteristics. Subjects reported high degree of benefit.

#### NEED OF THE STUDY

It is very important to because numerous studies shows that very few choir singers are aware about the vocal hygiene awareness program, and these

individuals have a higher chance for developing voice disorders. As a result analyzing the awareness among this population will give us a clear understanding about vocal hygiene that they practice in their daily living.

#### METHOD

##### AIM

The aim of the present study was to analyse the awareness of vocal hygiene program in choir singers The study was carried out in two phases

Phase 1: Development of questionnaire and validation of questionnaire

Phase 2: Administration of questionnaire

##### PHASE I- DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire consisting of 10 questions were prepared. All 10 questions were close ended (yes/no) questions. The questions prepared were validated by 10 speech language pathologist who are working in the field for more than 5 years. The correction and suggestion advised by the SLP's were incorporated accordingly and the validation process of the questionnaire was completed and ready to administer. The questionnaire is shown below.

1.Are caffeinated and carbonated drinks good for vocal cords?

- Yes
- No

2.Does smoking and alcohol consumption cause irritation in the vocal cords?

- Yes
- No

3.Do consumption of spicy, acidic and fried foods cause changes in voice?

- Yes
- No

4.Vocal warm up exercises are necessary before a performance?

- Yes
- No

5.Does singing or speaking too loudly or too softly cause strain and fatigue to the vocal cords?

- Yes
- No

6.Does good posture increases breathe support and improves singing voice?

- Yes
- No

7. Is it important to take frequent voice breaks throughout the day to rest your voice?

- Yes
- No

8. Is excessive coughing or throat clearing good for your vocal cords

- Yes
- No

9. Amplification devices are useful while singing/speaking for all the public situations in order to avoid stress on your vocal cords?

- Yes
- No

10. Does intake of medications during cold/cough tend to dehydrate or dry out the voice?

- Yes
- No

**PHASE II- PARTICIPANTS WITH INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE CRITERIA**

A total of 30 participants who are in choir singing participated in the study. The study included participants who were above 20 years of age and with a minimum experience of more than 5 years in choir singing. Participants includes both choir singers who are both male and female. Subjects with voice problems, who underwent vocal surgeries and other issues were excluded from the study.

**STIMULUS USED:** A closed set of 10 questions were prepared and used for the collection of the data.

**PROCEDURE:** The list of verified questions were circulated among the church choir singers. Task of the participants was to read and understand the questions with adequate response.

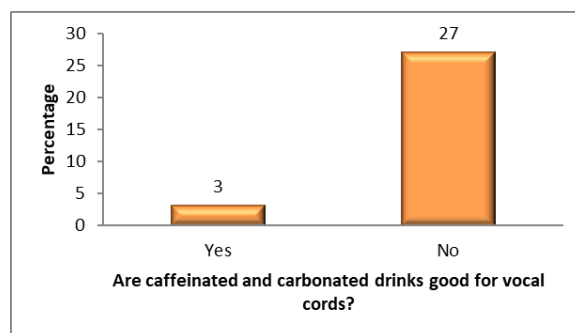
**ANALYSIS:** The further data summarized by using frequency and percentage. For each item the response was recorded as yes or no and credit point of one assigned for yes or zero for no.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of the present study was to analyse the awareness of vocal hygiene program in choir singers and given below is the response percentage of different participants on each question

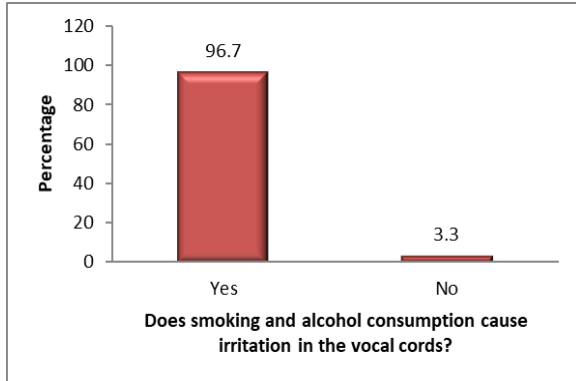
N=30

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Are caffeinated and carbonated drinks good for vocal cords?	Yes	3	10
	No	27	90
Does smoking and alcohol consumption cause irritation in the vocal cords?	Yes	29	96.7
	No	1	3.3
Does consumption of spicy, acidic, and fried foods cause changes in voice?	Yes	21	70
	No	9	30
Vocal warm up exercises are necessary before a performance?	Yes	29	96.7
	No	1	3.3
Does singing or speaking too loudly or too softly cause strain and fatigue to the vocal cords?	Yes	23	76.7
	No	7	23.3
Does good posture increases breathe capacity and improves singing voice?	Yes	27	90
	No	3	10
Is it important to take frequent voice breaks throughout the day to rest your voice?	Yes	27	90
	No	3	10
Is excessive coughing or throat clearing good for your vocal cords?	Yes	5	16.7
	No	25	83.3
Amplification devices are useful while singing/speaking for all public situations in order to avoid stress on your vocal cords?	Yes	25	83.3
	No	5	16.7
Does intake of medications during cold/cough tend to dehydrate or dry out the voice?	Yes	18	60
	No	12	40

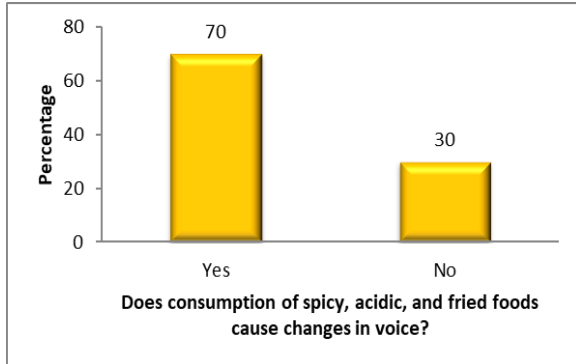


From the above figure it can be seen that 27% of

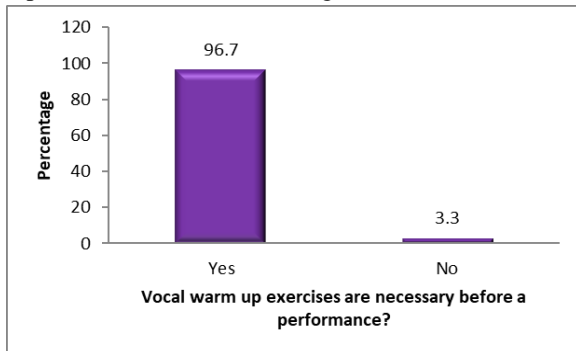
singers have reported that caffeinated and carbonated drinks are not good for vocal cords, and 3 % of people have reported that it is good for vocal cords



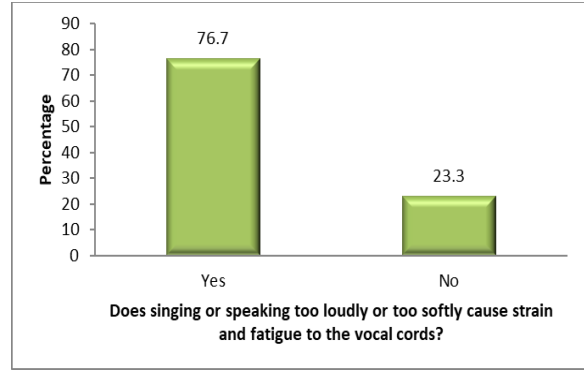
From the above figure it can be seen that 96.7% of singers have reported that smoking and alcohol consumption causes irritation in the vocal cords, and 3.3% of people were against the statement.



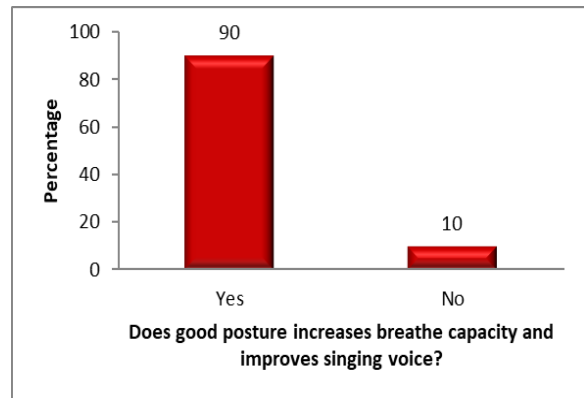
From the above fig it shows that 70% of singers have reported that consumption of spicy, acidic, and fried foods causes change in voice, 30% of singers have reported that no changes will be seen



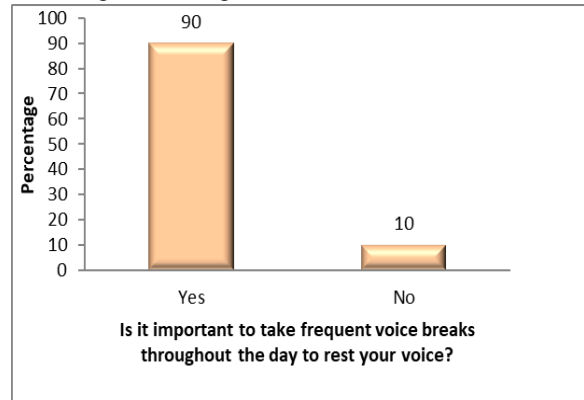
From the above fig it shows that 96.7% of singers have reported that vocal warm up exercises are necessary before a performance, and 3.3% of singers have reported that vocal warm up exercises are not necessary



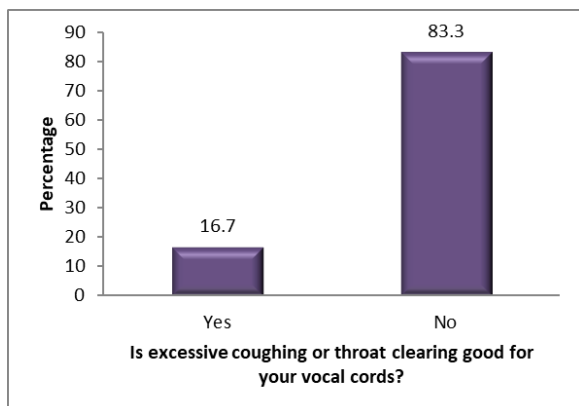
From the above fig it shows that 76.7% of singers have reported that singing/speaking too loudly or too softly causes strain and fatigue to the vocal cords, and 23.3 % have reported that singing / speaking too loudly or too softly will not cause strain and fatigue to vocal cords.



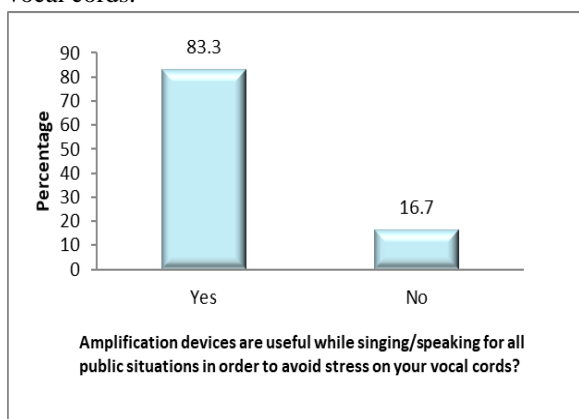
From the above fig it shows that 90% of singers have reported that maintaining a good posture increase breathe capacity and improves singing voice. And 10% singers were against the statement.



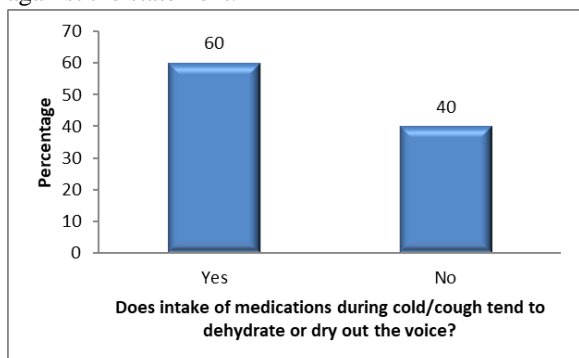
From the above fig it shows that 90% of singers have reported that taking frequent breaks is essential for voice rest, and 10% of singers were against the statement



From the above fig it shows that 83.3% of singers reported that excessive coughing or throat clearing is not good for vocal cords and 16% of singers reported that excessive coughing or throat clearing is good for vocal cords.



From the above fig it shows that 83.3% of singers reported that amplification devices are useful while singing/speaking for all public situations to avoid stress on vocal cords. And 16.7 % of singers were against the statement.



From the above fig it shows that 60% of singers reported that intake of medications will dehydrate or dry out voice, and 40% of singers have reported that intake of medications will not dehydrate or dry out voice.

The results from above graphs states that, there is moderate awareness of vocal hygiene program in choir singers.

### DISCUSSION

Choir singing is one of the traditional ways of singing through vocal music performed at religious places by a group of untrained singers who learned singing without any formal education but only through observation and feedback. These individuals are also at a risk for developing voice disorders. So the present study aimed to analyse the awareness of vocal hygiene program in choir singers. The findings of this study revealed that there is a moderate aware ness of vocal hygiene program in choir singers.

### CONCLUSION

Choir singers are a group of singers who sing in a chorus of voices. The purpose of the study was to find out the awareness among choir singers about the awareness of vocal hygiene program. And the results revealed a moderate awareness among choir singers .

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