


Stanford



Heather Starmer, MA CCC-SLP, BCS-S

Clinical Professor, Otolaryngology (Head and Neck Surgery)

 Curriculum Vitae available Online

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Administrative Contact**

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Bio

BIO

Heather Starmer is a Clinical Associate Professor and Director of the Head and Neck Cancer Speech and Swallowing Rehabilitation Center. Prior to joining the faculty at Stanford University, Heather served as the lead of the head and neck cancer rehabilitation program at Johns Hopkins University.

Heather graduated from California State University at Long Beach in 1998 with a BA in Communicative Disorders. She earned her MA from the University of Pittsburgh in 2000. She completed her fellowship at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Pittsburgh with a focus in head and neck cancer and rehabilitation of swallowing disorders.

Heather specializes in the rehabilitation of speech, voice, and swallowing in patients with head and neck cancer. She has particular interest in prevention of communication and swallowing disorders associated with radiation and chemotherapy. She has a strong interest in head and neck cancer survivorship and helping patients to accomplish their personal goals and to optimize their quality of life long term. She is a board certified specialist in swallowing disorders.

Heather's academic goals include improving communication and swallowing outcomes following a diagnosis of head and neck cancer through clinical research. She was a key member of a collaborative research group at Johns Hopkins resulting in multiple publications and presentations on strategies to minimize speech and swallowing difficulties. Recent advances in pain management during radiation therapy developed by this research collaborative have already shown great promise in protecting patients from potential swallowing difficulties during and after their cancer treatment. She works closely with colleagues in surgery, radiation oncology, and medical oncology to tackle the often difficult problems encountered by patients with head and neck cancer. She has particular interest in investigating the role of innovative surgical techniques such as Transoral Robotic Surgery (TORS) in minimizing long term functional deficits.

Heather is involved in the education of future speech pathologists as well as residents and fellows in the Otolaryngology program. She regularly lectures on issues regarding rehabilitation of patients with head and neck cancer at multiple universities as well as at the national level. She is a member of multiple professional societies including the American Speech Language Hearing Association, the Dysphagia Research Society, and the American Head and Neck Society.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Clinical Professor, Otolaryngology (Head and Neck Surgery)

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Director, Head and Neck Cancer Speech and Swallowing Rehabilitation, Stanford University, (2014- present)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Board Member, American Board on Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (2020 - present)
- Member, American Head and Neck Society - Prevention and Early Detection Committee (2013 - 2019)
- Member, Dysphagia Research Society (2010 - present)
- Member, American Head and Neck Society (2010 - present)
- Member, American Speech Language Hearing Association Special Interest Group 3 - Voice Disorders (2009 - present)
- Member, American Speech Language Hearing Association Special Interest Group 13 -Swallowing disorders (2009 - present)
- Member, American Speech Language Hearing Association (2000 - present)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- BA, California State University - Long Beach , Communicative Disorders (1998)
- MA, University of Pittsburgh , Communication Science and Disorders (2000)
- Certificate, Johns Hopkins University , Clinical Investigation (2010)

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Heather's areas of research interest include investigation of strategies to enhance patient adherence to rehabilitation plans during head and neck cancer treatment, evaluation of communication and swallowing outcomes after Transoral Robotic Surgery (TORS), and assessment of voice outcomes after thyroid surgeries.

CLINICAL TRIALS

- Investigation of Two Swallowing Therapy Models During Radiation Therapy for Head and Neck Cancer, Not Recruiting
- Multispectral Imaging to Characterize Patterns of Vascular Supply Within Lymphoepithelial Mucosa in Oropharyngeal Cancer, Not Recruiting

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Head and neck lymphedema and quality of life: the patient perspective.** *Supportive care in cancer : official journal of the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer*
Starmer, H. M., Cherry, M. G., Patterson, J., Fleming, J., Young, B.
2023; 31 (12): 696
- **Use of the G8 Geriatric Screening Tool in Surgical Head and Neck Cancer Patients Requiring Rehabilitation: A Multisite Investigation.** *The Annals of otology, rhinology, and laryngology*
Palmer, A. D., Starmer, H., Sathe, N., Yao, T. J., Bolognone, R. K., Edwards, J., Crino, C., Kizner, J., Graville, D. J.
2023: 34894231191869
- **Expert Consensus Statement: Management of Dysphagia in Head and Neck Cancer Patients.** *Otolaryngology--head and neck surgery : official journal of American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*
Kuhn, M. A., Gillespie, M. B., Ishman, S. L., Ishii, L. E., Brody, R., Cohen, E., Dhar, S. I., Hutcheson, K., Jefferson, G., Johnson, F., Rameau, A., Sher, D., Starmer, et al
2023; 168 (4): 571-592
- **Internal oedema and dysphagia characteristics in patients with head and neck cancer.** *Clinical otolaryngology : official journal of ENT-UK ; official journal of Netherlands Society for Oto-Rhino-Laryngology & Cervico-Facial Surgery*
Starmer, H. M., Hutcheson, K., Patterson, J.
2023

- **Letter to the Editor re: Intra and interobserver agreement of the Dynamic Imaging Grade of Swallowing Toxicity Scale (DIGEST) in fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES): the importance of observer-tailored training.** *European archives of oto-rhino-laryngology : official journal of the European Federation of Oto-Rhino-Laryngological Societies (EUFOS) : affiliated with the German Society for Oto-Rhino-Laryngology - Head and Neck Surgery*
Hutcheson, K. A., Starmer, H.
2023
- **Head and Neck Virtual Coach: A Randomized Control Trial of Mobile Health as an Adjunct to Swallowing Therapy During Head and Neck Radiation.** *Dysphagia*
Starmer, H. M., Klein, D., Montgomery, A., Goldsmith, T., McCarroll, L., Richmon, J., Christopher Holsinger, F., Beadle, B., Jain, P.
2022
- **Transoral Robotic Surgery for Recurrent Tumors of the Upper Aerodigestive Tract (RECUT): An International Cohort Study.** *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*
Hardman, J. C., Holsinger, F. C., Brady, G. C., Beharry, A., Bonifer, A. T., D'Andrea, G., Dabas, S. K., de Almeida, J. R., Duvvuri, U., Floros, P., Ghanem, T. A., Gorphe, P., Gross, et al
2022
- **Practice patterns in transoral robotic surgery: results of an American head and neck society survey.** *Journal of robotic surgery*
Holcomb, A. J., Kammer, R., Holman, A., Goldsmith, T., Divi, V., Starmer, H. M., Zenga, J., Li, R., Patel, U. A., Richmon, J. D.
2022
- **Assessment of Measures of Head and Neck Lymphedema Following Head and Neck Cancer Treatment: A Systematic Review.** *Lymphatic research and biology*
Starmer, H., Cherry, M. G., Patterson, J., Young, B., Fleming, J.
2022
- **The American Broncho-Esophagological Association Position Statement on Swallowing Fluoroscopy.** *The Laryngoscope*
Dhar, S. I., Nativ-Zeltzer, N., Starmer, H., Morimoto, L. N., Evangelista, L., O'Rourke, A., Fritz, M., Rameau, A., Randall, D., Cates, D., Allen, J., Postma, G., Kuhn, et al
2022
- **Timing of postoperative oral feeding after head and neck mucosal free flap reconstruction.** *Laryngoscope investigative otolaryngology*
Stramiello, J., Nuyen, B., Saraswathula, A., Blumenfeld, L., Divi, V., Rosenthal, E., Orosco, R., Starmer, H. M.
2021; 6 (5): 1031-1036
- **Timing of postoperative oral feeding after head and neck mucosal free flap reconstruction** *LARYNGOSCOPE INVESTIGATIVE OTOLARYNGOLOGY*
Stramiello, J., Nuyen, B., Saraswathula, A., Blumenfeld, L., Divi, V., Rosenthal, E., Orosco, R., Starmer, H. M.
2021
- **Adaptation and Validation of the Dynamic Imaging Grade of Swallowing Toxicity for Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing: DIGEST-FEES.** *Journal of speech, language, and hearing research : JSLHR*
Starmer, H. M., Arrese, L., Langmore, S., Ma, Y., Murray, J., Patterson, J., Pisegna, J., Roe, J., Tabor-Gray, L., Hutcheson, K.
2021: 1-9
- **The Stanford Multidisciplinary Swallowing Disorders Center.** *Clinical gastroenterology and hepatology : the official clinical practice journal of the American Gastroenterological Association*
Nandwani, M., Dewan, K., Starmer, H., Kamal, A. N., Clarke, J. O.
2021
- **Development and reliability of the Revised Patterson Edema Scale.** *Clinical otolaryngology : official journal of ENT-UK ; official journal of Netherlands Society for Oto-Rhino-Laryngology & Cervico-Facial Surgery*
Starmer, H. M., Drinnan, M., Bhabra, M., Watson, L., Patterson, J.
2021
- **Patient Reported Outcomes and Objective Swallowing Assessments in a Multidisciplinary Dysphagia Clinic.** *The Laryngoscope*
Dewan, K., Clarke, J. O., Kamal, A. N., Nandwani, M., Starmer, H. M.
2020
- **Swallowing and Communication Management of Tracheostomy and Laryngectomy in the Context of COVID-19: A Review.** *JAMA otolaryngology-- head & neck surgery*

- Vergara, J., Starmer, H. M., Wallace, S., Bolton, L., Seedat, J., de Souza, C. M., Freitas, S. V., Skoretz, S. A.
2020
- **Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Dysphagia in Patients Infected With SARS-CoV-2: A Review of the Literature and International Guidelines.** *American journal of speech-language pathology*
Vergara, J., Skoretz, S. A., Brodsky, M. B., Miles, A., Langmore, S. E., Wallace, S., Seedat, J., Starmer, H. M., Bolton, L., Clave, P., Freitas, S. V., Bogaardt, H., Matsuo, et al
2020: 1–12
 - **Aspects of the assessment and management of pharyngoesophageal dysphagia.** *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*
Allen, J., Dewan, K., Herbert, H., Randall, D. R., Starmer, H., Stein, E.
2020
 - **Patient advocacy in head and neck cancer: realities, challenges and the role of the multi-disciplinary team.** *Clinical otolaryngology : official journal of ENT-UK ; official journal of Netherlands Society for Oto-Rhino-Laryngology & Cervico-Facial Surgery*
Dawson, C., Starmer, H., Nund, R., Coffey, M., Roe, J., Govender, R., Brady, G., Patterson, J. M., Topping, A., Nankivell, P., Parmar, S., Sharma, N., Pracy, et al
2020
 - **Managing the Head and Neck Cancer Patient with Tracheostomy or Laryngectomy During the COVID-19 Pandemic.** *Head & neck*
Kligerman, M. P., Vukkadala, N. n., Tsang, R. K., Sunwoo, J. B., Holsinger, F. C., Chan, J. Y., Damrose, E. J., Kearney, A. n., Starmer, H. M.
2020
 - **Building an integrated multidisciplinary swallowing disorder clinic: considerations, challenges, and opportunities.** *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*
Starmer, H. M., Dewan, K. n., Kamal, A. n., Khan, A. n., Maclean, J. n., Randall, D. R.
2020
 - **Management of Dysphagia in The Head and Neck Cancer Patient during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Practical Strategy.** *Head & neck*
Ku, P. K., Holsinger, F. C., Chan, J. Y., Yeung, Z. C., Chan, B. Y., Tong, M. C., Starmer, H. M.
2020
 - **Effectiveness of a Home-based Head and Neck Lymphedema Management Program: A Pilot Study.** *The Laryngoscope*
Yao, T. n., Beadle, B. n., Holsinger, C. F., Starmer, H. M.
2020
 - **Cost comparison of treatment for oropharyngeal carcinoma** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Tam, K., Orosco, R. K., Colevas, A., Bedi, N., Starmer, H. M., Beadle, B. M., Holsinger, F.
2019; 129 (7): 1604–9
 - **Implementation of a targeted HPV educational program in a population with HIV.** *World journal of otorhinolaryngology - head and neck surgery*
Ayoub, N., Sunwoo, J. B., Starmer, H. M.
2019; 5 (2): 105–11
 - **Clinical Decision Making with Head and Neck Cancer Patients with Dysphagia.** *Seminars in speech and language*
Starmer, H. n., Edwards, J. n.
2019; 40 (3): 213–26
 - **A Next-Generation Single-Port Robotic Surgical System for Transoral Robotic Surgery: Results From Prospective Nonrandomized Clinical Trials.** *JAMA otolaryngology-- head & neck surgery*
Holsinger, F. C., Magnuson, J. S., Weinstein, G. S., Chan, J. Y., Starmer, H. M., Tsang, R. K., Wong, E. W., Rassekh, C. H., Bedi, N. n., Hong, S. S., Orosco, R. n., O'Malley, B. W., Moore, et al
2019
 - **Cost comparison of treatment for oropharyngeal carcinoma.** *The Laryngoscope*
Tam, K., Orosco, R. K., Dimitrios Colevas, A., Bedi, N., Starmer, H. M., Beadle, B. M., Christopher Holsinger, F.
2018
 - **Feasibility of a Mobile Application to Enhance Swallowing Therapy for Patients Undergoing Radiation-Based Treatment for Head and Neck Cancer**
Starmer, H. M., Abrams, R., Webster, K., Kizner, J., Beadle, B., Holsinger, F., Quon, H., Richmon, J.
SPRINGER.2018: 227–33

- **The impact of developing a speech and swallow rehab program: Improving patient satisfaction and multidisciplinary care.** *Laryngoscope*
Starmer, H. M., Ayoub, N., Byward, C., Kizner, J., Le, Q., Hara, W., Holsinger, F. C.
2017
- **One-Year Swallowing Outcomes in Patients Treated with Prophylactic Gabapentin During Radiation-Based Treatment for Oropharyngeal Cancer.** *Dysphagia*
Starmer, H. M., Yang, W., Gourin, C. G., Kumar, R., Jones, B., McNutt, T., Cheng, S., Quon, H.
2017
- **Dynamic Imaging Grade of Swallowing Toxicity (DIGEST): Scale Development and Validation** *CANCER*
Hutcheson, K. A., Barrow, M. P., Barringer, D. A., Knott, J. K., Lin, H. Y., Weber, R. S., Fuller, C. D., Lai, S. Y., Alvarez, C. P., Raut, J., Lazarus, C. L., May, A., Patterson, et al
2017; 123 (1): 62-70
- **Evaluating Post-Radiotherapy Laryngeal Function with Laryngeal Videostroboscopy in Early Stage Glottic Cancer.** *Frontiers in oncology*
Marciscano, A. E., Charu, V. n., Starmer, H. M., Best, S. R., Quon, H. n., Hillel, A. T., Akst, L. M., Kiess, A. P.
2017; 7: 124
- **The Impact of Dysphonic Voices on Healthy Listeners: Listener Reaction Times, Speech Intelligibility, and Listener Comprehension.** *American journal of speech-language pathology*
Evitts, P. M., Starmer, H., Teets, K., Montgomery, C., Calhoun, L., Schulze, A., MacKenzie, J., Adams, L.
2016: 1-15
- **Dynamic Imaging Grade of Swallowing Toxicity (DIGEST): Scale development and validation.** *Cancer*
Hutcheson, K. A., Barrow, M. P., Barringer, D. A., Knott, J. K., Lin, H. Y., Weber, R. S., Fuller, C. D., Lai, S. Y., Alvarez, C. P., Raut, J., Lazarus, C. L., May, A., Patterson, et al
2016
- **The Effect of Radiation Dose on Swallowing: Evaluation of Aspiration and Kinematics** *DYSPHAGIA*
Starmer, H. M., Quon, H., Kumar, R., Alcorn, S., Murano, E., Jones, B., Humbert, I.
2015; 30 (4): 430-437
- **Quantifying Labial Strength and Function in Facial Paralysis Effect of Targeted Lip Injection Augmentation** *JAMA FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY*
Starmer, H., Lyford-Pike, S., Ishii, L. E., Byrne, P. A., Boahene, K. D.
2015; 17 (4): 274-278
- **Short- and long-term outcomes of laryngeal cancer care in the elderly.** *The Laryngoscope*
Gourin, C. G., Starmer, H. M., Herbert, R. J., Frick, K. D., Forastiere, A. A., Eisele, D. W., Quon, H.
2014
- **Feasibility of rapid discharge after transoral robotic surgery of the oropharynx.** *The Laryngoscope*
Richmon, J. D., Feng, A. L., Yang, W., Starmer, H., Quon, H., Gourin, C. G.
2014; 124 (11): 2518-25
- **Swallowing outcomes in patients with oropharyngeal cancer undergoing organ-preservation treatment.** *Head & neck*
Starmer, H. M., Tippet, D., Webster, K., Quon, H., Jones, B., Hardy, S., Gourin, C. G.
2014; 36 (10): 1392-7
- **Effect of Gabapentin on Swallowing During and After Chemoradiation for Oropharyngeal Squamous Cell Cancer** *DYSPHAGIA*
Starmer, H. M., Yang, W., Raval, R., Gourin, C. G., Richardson, M., Kumar, R., Jones, B., McNutt, T., Cheng, S., Quon, H.
2014; 29 (3): 396-402
- **Dysphagia in head and neck cancer: prevention and treatment** *CURRENT OPINION IN OTOLARYNGOLOGY & HEAD AND NECK SURGERY*
Starmer, H. M.
2014; 22 (3): 195-200
- **Dysphagia, Short-Term Outcomes, and Cost of Care After Anterior Cervical Disc Surgery** *DYSPHAGIA*
Starmer, H. M., Riley, L. H., Hillel, A. T., Akst, L. M., Best, S. R., Gourin, C. G.
2014; 29 (1): 68-77

- **Attendance in Voice Therapy: Can an Interdisciplinary Care Model Have an Impact?** *ANNALS OF OTOTOLOGY RHINOLOGY AND LARYNGOLOGY*
Starmer, H. M., Liu, Z., Akst, L. M., Gourin, C.
2014; 123 (2): 117-123
- **Patient-Perceived Long-Term Communication and Swallow Function Following Cerebellopontine Angle Surgery** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Starmer, H. M., Ward, B. K., Best, S. R., Gourin, C. G., Akst, L. M., Hillel, A., Brem, H., Francis, H. W.
2014; 124 (2): 476-480
- **Radiation dose to the floor of mouth muscles predicts swallowing complications following chemoradiation in oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma** *ORAL ONCOLOGY*
Kumar, R., Madanikia, S., Starmer, H., Yang, W., Murano, E., Alcorn, S., McNutt, T., Le, Y., Quon, H.
2014; 50 (1): 65-70
- **The Use of Low-Osmolar Water-Soluble Contrast in Videofluoroscopic Swallowing Exams** *DYSPHAGIA*
Harris, J. A., Bartelt, D., Campion, M., Gayler, B. W., Jones, B., Hayes, A., Haynos, J., Herbick, S., Kling, T., Lingaraj, A., Singer, M., Starmer, H., Smith, et al
2013; 28 (4): 520-527
- **Is speech language pathologist evaluation necessary in the nonoperative treatment of head and neck cancer?** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Starmer, H. M., Gourin, C. G.
2013; 123 (7): 1571-1572
- **National prevalence and impact of perioperative vagus nerve injury in vestibular schwannoma** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Ward, B. K., Francis, H. W., Best, S. R., Starmer, H. M., Akst, L. M., Gourin, C. G.
2012; 122 (12): 2824-2831
- **The effect of pneumonia on short-term outcomes and cost of care after head and neck cancer surgery** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Semenov, Y. R., Starmer, H. M., Gourin, C. G.
2012; 122 (9): 1994-2004
- **Risk Factors for Vagal Palsy following Cerebellopontine Angle Surgery** *OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD AND NECK SURGERY*
Best, S. R., Starmer, H. M., Agrawal, Y., Ward, B. K., Hillel, A. T., Chien, W. W., Francis, H. W., Tamargo, R. J., Akst, L. M.
2012; 147 (2): 364-368
- **The relationship between depressive symptoms, quality of life, and swallowing function in head and neck cancer patients 1 year after definitive therapy** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Lin, B. M., Starmer, H. M., Gourin, C. G.
2012; 122 (7): 1518-1525
- **Prevalence, Characteristics, and Management of Swallowing Disorders following Cerebellopontine Angle Surgery** *115th AAO-HNSF Annual Meeting and OTO EXPO*
Starmer, H. M., Best, S. R., Agrawal, Y., Chien, W. W., Hillel, A. T., Francis, H. W., Tamargo, R. J., Akst, L. M.
SAGE PUBLICATIONS LTD.2012: 419-25
- **Multidisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Clinic and Adherence with Speech Pathology** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Starmer, H., Sanguineti, G., Marur, S., Gourin, C. G.
2011; 121 (10): 2131-2135
- **The Relationship Between Depressive Symptoms and Initial Quality of Life and Function in Head and Neck Cancer** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Chan, J. Y., Lua, L. L., Starmer, H. H., Sun, D. Q., Rosenblatt, E. S., Gourin, C. G.
2011; 121 (6): 1212-1218
- **Pretreatment Swallowing Assessment in Head and Neck Cancer Patients** *LARYNGOSCOPE*
Starmer, H. H., Gourin, C. G., Lua, L. L., Burkhead, L.
2011; 121 (6): 1208-1211
- **Does Prosthesis Diameter Matter? The Relationship Between Voice Prosthesis Diameter and Complications** *Annual Meeting of the American-Academy-of-Otolaryngology-Head-and-Neck-Surgery-Foundation and OTO EXPO*
Starmer, H. M., Agrawal, N., Koch, W., Richmon, J., Webster, K., Gourin, C. G.
SAGE PUBLICATIONS LTD.2011: 740-46

- **VOLUMETRIC CHANGE OF SELECTED ORGANS AT RISK DURING IMRT FOR OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RADIATION ONCOLOGY BIOLOGY PHYSICS*
Ricchetti, F., Wu, B., McNutt, T., Wong, J., Forastiere, A., Marur, S., Starmer, H., Sanguineti, G.
2011; 80 (1): 161-168
- **Inhaled Triamcinolone With Proton Pump Inhibitor for Treatment of Vocal Process Granulomas: A Series of 67 Granulomas** *89th Annual Meeting of the American-Broncho-Esophagological-Association*
Hillel, A. T., Lin, L., Samlan, R., Starmer, H., Leahy, K., Flint, P. W.
ANNALS PUBL CO.2010: 325-30
- **Complications That Affect Postlaryngectomy Voice Restoration Primary Surgery vs Salvage Surgery** *ARCHIVES OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD & NECK SURGERY*
Starmer, H. M., Ishman, S. L., Flint, P. W., Bhatti, N. I., Richmon, J., Koch, W., Webster, K., Tufano, R., Gourin, C. G.
2009; 135 (11): 1165-1169
- **Effects of laryngeal cancer on voice and swallowing** *OTOLARYNGOLOGIC CLINICS OF NORTH AMERICA*
Starmer, H. M., Tippet, D. C., Webster, K. T.
2008; 41 (4): 793-?