

Voice Issues in Professional and Occupational Voice Users

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Content outline

1. Voice production
2. Risk of voice issues
3. Work related voice hazard
 - Definition of Professional, Occupational and Active Voice Users
4. Vocal fold pathologies
5. The impact of voice disorder
6. Voice safety in Malaysia: where are we?
7. Conclusion

Voice

- The primary occupational tool for many professions, yet rarely do we think about the demands placed on the human voice
- If a famous singer cancels a concert tour due to a voice problem—that might make the news.
- Many people spend the majority of their workday using their voice in some capacity.
- What happens if their voices don't function properly?



Adele Left 'Heartbroken' After Canceling Wembley Stadium Concerts Due to Damaged Vocal Cords

Adele underwent throat surgery for a hemorrhaged vocal chord in November 2011

By **Karen Mizoguchi** | Published on June 30, 2017 08:30PM EDT



PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER POLK/GETTY IMAGES FOR NARAS

[Adele](#) has damaged her vocal cords nearly six years after [undergoing throat surgery](#) for a [hemorrhaged vocal chord](#) in November 2011.

In an emotional letter to fans and concertgoers via social media, the Grammy winner, 29, announced she has canceled her last two tour dates at London's Wembley Stadium following her June 28 and June 29 performances.

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No Voice equals No Work

- Occupations at risk of voice disorders as a sequence of their inherent work conditions

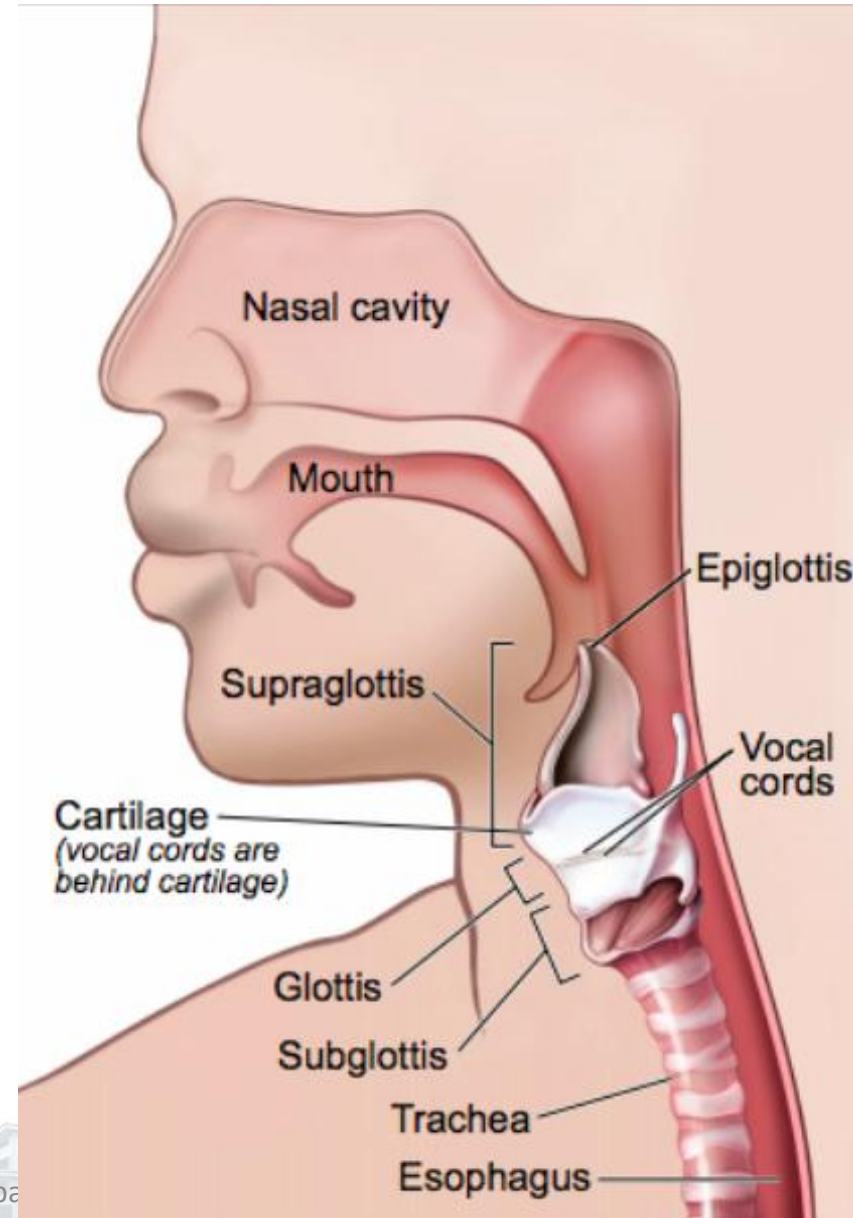
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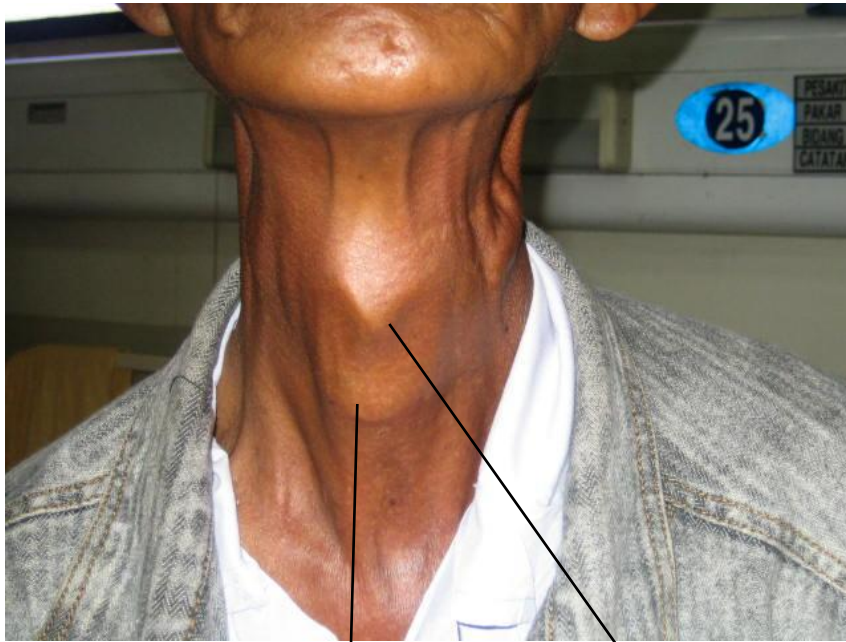


1. Voice Production

Anatomy of voice box

LARYNX/ LARING






Thyroid cartilage

Cricoid cartilage



2. Risk of voice issues

- Infection- laryngitis
- Voice abuse, overuse or misuse
- Bad habit: cigarette smoking, alcohol, unhealthy diet, throat clearing
- Allergic rhinitis
- Laryngopharyngeal reflux
- Stress
- Thyroid issues
- Aging
- Autoimmune diseases- rare



Nasal cavity:
allergic rhinitis

3. Work related voice hazard

Classification of voice users in occupation

- Different vocal loads, work characteristics and phonatory needs.
- **Professional voice users** as those who have a need for a skillful voice
- **Occupational voice-users** ‘who need a lot of voice and often must use a loud voice’ (such as the teachers and sports coaches described in the previous section).
- **Active voice users** who use their voice during a working day but without regularly raised intensity (e.g. telemarketers and healthworkers)

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Occupational Vocal Health: An Emerging Workplace Wellness Issue

The topic has gained increasing attention in this country, with 2007 seeing the first-ever International Conference on Occupational Voice Research in San Antonio.

BY CHRISTOPHER GASKILL, WILLIAM WEEMS | JUL 01, 2009



21/02/2024

Conference & Exhibition on Occupational Safety & Health, KAGC

NEA NEWS

Teacher Voice Problems Are an Occupational Hazard. Here's How to Reduce the Risk.

On average, teachers are more than twice as likely as non-teachers to have voice problems and three times more likely to see a doctor about the issue.

By: Cindy Long
Published: June 23, 2016



Teaching a class of fourth graders takes a toll, and North Miami Elementary School teacher Amanda Smith sometimes pays it with her voice. She lost her voice twice over the 2015-2016 school year, once in November and again in late spring.

hazards magazine

hazards magazine • PO Box 4042 • Sheffield • S8 2DG • England • www.hazards.org

Hazards issue 112, October-December 2010

Teacher gets voice loss payouts but will never teach again



When teacher Joyce Walters developed vocal nodules and lost her voice, her bosses shrugged and said it 'was an occupational hazard for all teachers'. Joyce has now won a six figure settlement, but she's speaking out because she'd much rather have the use of her voice and the job she loved.

- Voice disorders are common in people who uses their voice a lot at work
- Reasons:
 - Lack of awareness of the vocal demands of their careers
 - Lack of training (e.g., warm up)
 - Unaware of vocal hygiene
 - Long periods of voice usage
 - Loud environments



The Impact of Vocal and Laryngeal Pathologies Among Professional Singers: A Meta-analysis

March 2018

DOI: [10.1016/j.jvoice.2017.09.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2017.09.002)

Michelle Kwok · Guy D. Eslick

Abstract

Objective: Professional singers are more likely to develop laryngeal pathologies and symptoms associated with misuse and overuse of the voice. However, different studies have shown conflicting evidence. We aim to perform a

Conclusion: Professional singers are at an increased risk of laryngeal pathologies and symptoms associated with vocal misuse and overuse, particularly hoarseness, GERD, edema, and polyps.

cross-sectional studies that reported the risk of laryngeal pathologies in singers were included. Data were pooled by a random effects model and the pooled odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated. Results: There was a positive relationship between singing and laryngeal pathologies. There was an increased risk of hoarseness (OR: 2.00, 95% CI: 1.61-2.49), gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) (OR: 1.45, 95% CI: 1.19-1.77), Reinke edema (OR: 2.15, 95% CI: 1.08-4.30), and polyps (OR: 2.10, 95% CI: 1.06-4.14) in professional singers. Conclusion: Professional singers are at an increased risk of laryngeal pathologies and symptoms associated with vocal misuse and overuse, particularly hoarseness, GERD, edema, and polyps.


Famous Singers Who Suffered Serious Vocal Injuries

How Beloved Voices Go Silent

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Frank Sinatra. Hulton Archive/Getty Images

-  Print
 - Famous Singers Who Have Experienced This
 - Here are some beloved voices that were silenced due to injury.
 - [Adele](#): Vocal hemorrhage canceled a tour, had surgery.
 - Julie Andrews: Throat nodules, and reportedly, further damage due to surgery to remove them. Permanent damage ensued, ending her singing career.
 - Björk: Vocal nodules, spent three years doing special vocal exercises, so as to avoid surgery.
 - [Mariah Carey](#): Vocal nodules.
 - Roger Daltry (the Who): Precancerous growth.
 - Natalie Dessay: Vocal nodules, had surgery.
 - [Celine Dion](#): Weakness in vocal cord due to a viral illness.
 - Lesley Feist: Unspecified vocal cord damage, took a six-month hiatus, eventually changed her singing style.
 -
- [Whitney Houston](#): Vocal nodules.
- [Elton John](#): Vocal nodules, had surgery, his voice was noticeably deeper afterward.
- Shirley Manson (Garbage): Vocal nodules.
- John Mayer: Vocal granuloma, canceled tours and took a two-year break from performing, had surgery.
- [Freddie Mercury](#): Vocal nodules.
- Frank Ocean: Vocal tear (or bruise).
- Luciano Pavoratti: Vocal nodule, he decided to give up singing as a result, but soon recovered, and so resumed his career.
- [Frank Sinatra](#): Vocal nodules, took a month-long vow of silence.
- Paul Stanley (Kiss): Unspecified vocal injury.
- [Rod Stewart](#): Vocal nodules.
- Joss Stone: Vocal nodules.
- [Justin Timberlake](#): Vocal nodules.
- Steven Tyler (Aerosmith): Burst blood vessel.
- Keith Urban: Polyp, had surgery.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Determinants and Effects of Voice Disorders among Secondary School Teachers in Peninsular Malaysia Using a Validated Malay Version of VHI-10

Foong Ming Moy^{1*}, Victor Chee Wai Hoe², Noran Naqiah Hairi¹, Anne Hin Yee Chu^{1,4}, Awang Bulgiba¹, David Koh^{3,4}

1 Julius Centre University of Malaya, Department of Social & Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, **2** Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health-UM, Department of Social & Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, **3** PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei, Brunei Darussalam, **4** Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore



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- A total of 6039 teachers participated.
- Aged between 30 to 50 years.
- 10.4%(95% CI 7.1, 14.9) of the teachers had voice disorder (VHI-10 score > 11).
- Teachers with voice disorder were more likely to report higher rates of:
 - absenteeism (PR: 1.70, 95% CI 1.33, 2.19)
 - lower quality of life with lower SF12-v2 physical (0.98, 95% CI 0.96, 0.99) and mental (0.97, 95% CI 0.96, 0.98) component summary scales
 - higher anxiety levels (1.04, 95% CI 1.02, 1.06).



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A Vocal Health Survey among Primary School Teachers in Klang Valley, Malaysia

Dim Sy How and Mei Foong Ang

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Abstract

Teachers are one of the highest demanding professional voice users. They are believed to have an increased risk of developing voice disorder, and the cause is often associated with several factors such as high vocal demands, unfavourable working conditions, lifestyle, and lack of knowledge in vocal health. Vocal disorder not only affects teachers in conducting and managing classes. It also affects their daily interaction with people and contributes to the decline of their physical and emotional health. This study aims to understand teachers' current vocal condition better and measure teachers' knowledge of vocal care. An online survey was conducted; 40 teachers, 33 females and 7 males, responded to the study. The study reviewed that teachers voice feels dry (51.22%), sore (24.39%) and pain (12.20%) after a day of teaching and 78% of the teachers experience at least once vocal discomfort in a year. In conclusion, the insights and perception of vocal health base on self-report information of voice condition and lifestyle of teachers pertinent to this geographical location will be helpful in the development of vocal health programs for teachers in Malaysia.

4. Vocal fold pathologies

Most Common Vocal Injuries Among Singers Revealed



Professional status and a lack of prior vocal training were identified as the greatest risk factors for vocal injuries among the singers.

Written by Longjam Dineshwori | Updated : May 5, 2022 1:37 PM IST



Vocal injuries are common among singers, but the topic is rarely discussed in the singing community. Injured singers may not talk about it if they depend on singing for your livelihood, because injuries carry a stigma. Experts at UT Southwestern Medical Center have dispelled the myths associated with vocal injuries. Also, they have identified the most common conditions and what the treatments are required.



- Nodules: a callous-like injury that affected 58 per cent of these singers
- Blister-like injuries called pseudocysts,
- Polyps
- Cysts
- Vocal fold hemorrhages

While female singers were more likely to develop nodules and pseudocysts, polyps and cysts were found more common in male singers. The odds of developing polyps in female patients increased with age, but young male singers were more likely to develop nodules, the researchers added.



Treatment

- Voice rest
- Voice therapy
- Surgery

- Surgery risk of vocal cord scar
- Prevention is better than cure

60 MINUTES >

Adele opens up about vocal cord surgery

60

February 8, 2012 / 2:30 PM EST / CBS News



She couldn't talk, but she could still curse a blue streak. Chart-topping singer Adele, under orders to be silent for weeks after throat surgery, found an app that would allow her phone to voice the spicy language she typed into it. That's one of the stories the British singer, who is up for six Grammys Sunday night, tells Anderson Cooper in her first interview since that surgery, which she discusses for the first time. Adele will also sing for Cooper in her first public performance since the operation in a "60 Minutes" profile to be broadcast Sunday, Feb. 12 at 7:00 p.m. ET/PT.

"[Not speaking] was really hard," says Adele. "I love talking." So she began writing on a pad to communicate after her operation but also found a phone app she was especially pleased with. "I also had an application on my phone that you type the words into it and then it speaks it," she tells Cooper. "But the great thing is I love to swear. Most of [the apps] you can't swear on, but I found this one app where you can swear, so I'm still really getting my point across."

Adele's second album, "21," has not only sold nearly 17 million copies worldwide, but stayed atop the charts for longer than any album has for almost 20 years. She was at the beginning of what could be a fantastic career, until her voice just "went" while she was singing live on French radio. "Like someone put a curtain over my throat...and I could feel it. It felt like something popped in my throat," says Adele.

She found out she had a polyp on her vocal cord that had hemorrhaged. "I had laser surgery. [They] put lasers down your throat, cut off the

5. The impact of voice disorder

The Laryngoscope
© 2012 The American Laryngological,
Rhinological and Otological Society, Inc.

Direct Health Care Costs of Laryngeal Diseases and Disorders

Seth M. Cohen, MD, MPH; Jaewhan Kim, PhD; Nelson Roy, PhD, CCC-SLP; Carl Asche, PhD, MBA;
Mark Courey, MD

Objectives/Hypothesis: To estimate the annual direct costs associated with the diagnosis and management of laryngeal disorders.

Study Design: Retrospective analysis of data from a large, nationally representative, administrative US claims database.

Methods: Patients with a laryngeal disorder based on International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision-Clinical Modification codes from January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2008 and who were continuously enrolled for 12 months were included. Data regarding age, gender, geographic location, and type of physician providing the diagnosis were collected. Medical encounter, medication, and procedure costs were determined. Total and mean costs per person for 12 months were determined.

Results: Of almost 55 million individuals in the database, 309,300 patients with 12 months follow-up, mean age of 47.3 years (standard deviation: 21.3), and 63.5% female were identified. Acute and chronic laryngitis, nonspecific causes of dysphonia, and benign vocal fold lesions were the most common etiologies. The total annual direct costs ranged between \$178,524,552 to \$294,827,671, with mean costs per person between \$577.18 and \$953.21. Pharmacy claims accounted for 20.1% to 33.3%, procedure claims 50.4% to 69.9%, and medical encounter claims 16.3% to 8.6% of overall direct costs. Antireflux medication accounted for roughly 10% and antibiotics 6% of annual direct costs.

Conclusions: This study establishes the economic impact of the assessment and management of patients with laryngeal disorders and permits cost comparisons with other diseases.

Key Words: Dysphonia, costs, health economics, voice disorders, laryngeal disease.

Level of Evidence: 2b.

- Costs of treating dysphonia are significant.
- The direct costs of dysphonia, as estimated from a large administrative database study, were a mean US \$577 to US \$953 per patient per year.
- If an estimated 5.2 million patients with dysphonia seek treatment annually, this would translate into total direct health care costs up to US \$13.5 billion.
- These costs are comparable to those spent on conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, diabetes, and allergic rhinitis.

- Described 20 years ago within the Australian context, Pemberton et al. estimated teachers' lost workdays due to voice problems averaged 1.3 days/year.
- This absenteeism was estimated conservatively to cost the Victorian State Government approximately \$17 million per annum.



Occupational voice is a work in progress: active risk management, habilitation and rehabilitation

Debra Phyland^a and Anna Miles^b

Purpose of review

The current article reviews recent literature examining occupational voice use and occupational voice disorders (January 2018–July 2019).

Recent findings

Our understanding of the prevalence of voice disorders and work-related vocal use, vocal load and vocal ergonomics (environmental and person influences) across different occupations is continuing to build. There is encouraging evidence for the value of intervention programs for occupational voice users, particularly of late with performers, teachers and telemarketers. Education and prevention programs are emerging for other 'at risk' occupations.

Summary

Occupational health and workforce legislation does not adequately acknowledge and guide educational, preventive and intervention approaches to occupational voice disorders. Voice disorders are prevalent in certain occupations and there is an urgent need for research to support occupational voice health and safety risk measurement, prevention and intervention. Large population-based studies are required with a focus on the health and economic burden of occupational voice disorders.

Keywords

dysphonia, economics, occupational health, occupational voice users, voice

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- Occupational voice users exhibit increased risk of dysphonia and suffer economic and psychosocial consequences.
- Increasing understanding of environmental and personal profiles of specific occupational groups is developing.
- Risk measurement is critical to evaluating and monitoring voice disorders in the work place.
- Risk management approaches including group therapy and community-based education program are gathering support across occupational groups.
- Researchers need to consider longevity of voice use with specific attention to pediatric professional voice users and their future as well as maintenance of occupational voice use in the aging workforce.

6. Voice safety in Malaysia: where are we?

- Voice safety is new in Malaysia
- Lack of Epidemiology information
- The voice problems among high voice demand group may be underestimated due to lack of awareness and non-seeking treatment
- 30% of patients who sought treatment in laryngology clinic at the Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM are occupational related.
- Activities to enhance awareness are increasing- World Voice Day 16th April each year

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MARINA MAT BAKI

berdehem adalah antara tabiat buruk yang boleh menjadi punca peti suara mengalami kecederaan serius seperti bengkak atau berdarah.

Pakar Perunding Kanan Otorinolaringologi, Fakulti Perubatan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Prof. Dr. Marina Mat Baki berkata, banyak risiko boleh dihadapi sekiranya peti suara tidak dijaga dengan baik.

"Penjagaan peti suara penting kerana ia kalau tidak ia boleh mendatangkan banyak masalah terutama bagi mereka yang banyak menggunakan suara seperti penyanyi, guru, peguam dan jurujual selain orang ramai yang gemar berkaraoke atau ketawa dengan kuat.

"Kajian di Barat mendapati kira-kira 20% guru mengalami masalah peti suara. Manakala di hospital tempatan pula, walaupun tiada data tetapi ada guru yang datang dengan masalah suara serak dan sebagainya," katanya ditemui pada sesi rakaman *laryngeal* karaoke oleh penyanyi tanah air, Datuk Shafinar Selamat, Misha Omar, Hael Husaini, Idayu dan Riko SOG di Jabatan Otorinolaringologi, Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz (HCTM), baru-baru ini. Turut hadir, Dekan Fakulti Perubatan HCTM, Prof. Dr. Abdul Hakim Abdul Galor.

Sesi itu diadakan sempena Hari Suara Sedunia disambut setiap tahun pada 16 April. Ia bermatlamat memberikan pendedahan kepada masyarakat bagaimana keadaan peti suara dan struktur sekitarnya bergerak semasa menghasilkan nada lagu tertentu.

Bersambung di muka 22

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Hari Suara Sedunia | Kesedaran tentang penjagaan suara masih rendah

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National-level World Voice Day to focus on issues affecting voice professionals



By Adib Povera - May 10, 2023 @ 6:16pm



Organising committee chairman Professor Datin Dr Marina Mat Baki said Human Resources Minister V. Sivakumar is scheduled to launch the programme which is jointly organised by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA), and NIOSH. -NSTP file pic

Conference & Exhibition on Occupational Safety & Health, KLCC

KUALA LUMPUR: This year's national-level World Voice Day celebration which is taking place on May 20 is



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- World Voice Day 2023- officiated by the the Deputy Minister of Human Resources Ministry
- Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
- The National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA)
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

NASIONAL

Wujudkan skim perlindungan suara golongan profesional

20 Mei 2023, 5:07pm

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Oleh Aslina Abu Bakar

BANGI: Kementerian Sumber Manusia, dalam usaha merangka polisi keselamatan peti suara bagi melindungi golongan profesional yang menggunakan suara sebagai kerjaya

utama
Conference & Exhibition on Occupational Safety & Health, KLCC

Its Deputy Minister Mustapha Sakmud said that thus far, there is no specific protection policy or scheme for the voice and professions that involve the voice, because most protection policies are only limited to the physical body.

"There are proposals from several parties, including the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (Aswara), to study a specific protection policy which can be used under the Social Security Organisation (Socso) should anything happen to our voices.

"For example, in the United States, this matter (voice protection scheme or policy) is common, but in Malaysia, it is still new, so this is something we will discuss and see if it is suitable to be implemented here," he said today.

the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Niosh).

Earlier, Mustapha, in his speech, said that the results of a study conducted by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) on primary school teachers in the Klang Valley, found that 78 per cent of them experience vocal discomfort at least once a year.

Kementerian Sumber Manusia teliti cadangan polisi kesihatan suara

Bernama
Mei 21, 2023 04:03 MYT



Mustapha berkata pekerja yang mempunyai masalah berkaitan suara turut dikaitkan isu ketidakhadiran yang ketara, kualiti hidup yang lebih rendah serta mempunyai tahap kebimbangan yang lebih tinggi. - Foto Facebook Mustapha Sakmud

BANGI: Kementerian Sumber Manusia akan meneliti cadangan awal bagi merangka polisi berkenaan kesihatan suara dan keselamatan peti suara bertujuan melindungi golongan profesional yang menggunakan suara dalam kerjaya seperti artis, pendidik dan penceramah.

Timbalan Menteri berkenaan Mustapha Sakmud berkata setakat ini tiada sebarang polisi atau skim perlindungan khusus bagi suara dan profesion yang melibatkan suara kerana kebanyakan polisi perlindungan hanya terhad kepada tubuh badan secara fizikal.



GENERAL

HUMAN RESOURCES MINISTRY STUDYING VOCAL HEALTH POLICY PROPOSAL - MUSTAPHA



BERNAMA

Mustapha Sakmud

20/05/2023 02:24 PM

Blog ▸ Voice Acting ▸ Vocal Health ▸ Should You Insure Your Voice?

VOICE ACTING

Should You Insure Your Voice?

Keaton Robbins | October 1, 2020



For people who use their voice professionally, the health of their voice matters more than anything.

Even if you take care of yourself and your voice, you never know when the unexpected can happen.

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Mariah Carey Reportedly Insured Her Voice for an Outrageous Sum of Money

VANITY FAIR
HOLLYWOOD

Her legs too!



BY JULIE MILLER

APRIL 8, 2016



BY SCOTT BARBOUR/GETTY IMAGES.

Mariah Carey, future reality star and billionaire's bride, has gone to great lengths to protect her most lucrative assets by securing an eight-digit insurance policy on both her voice and legs.

TMZ reports that the singer's Sweet Sweet Fantasy tour is going so well that the star took out a \$35 million insurance policy for her voice, and a matching insurance policy for her legs, so that she will be covered should anything go wrong with her vocal cords or gams during the rest of the world tour.

WATCH



it was a door stopper of a thing.

Openheimer According to CNN

Conclusion

- Voice disorders are prevalent in specific occupational groups.
- There is an urgent need for research to support occupational voice health and risk measurement, prevention and intervention.
- Education and prevention programs are emerging. More work need to be done collaboratively with the stakeholders.
- Large population-based studies are required with a focus on health and economic burden of occupational voice disorders.

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