



# I Identified my Grandma's Voice Disorder and Now I'm Here: An Examination of Speech-Language Pathologists' Treatment and Decision-making in Therapy for Vocal Polyps



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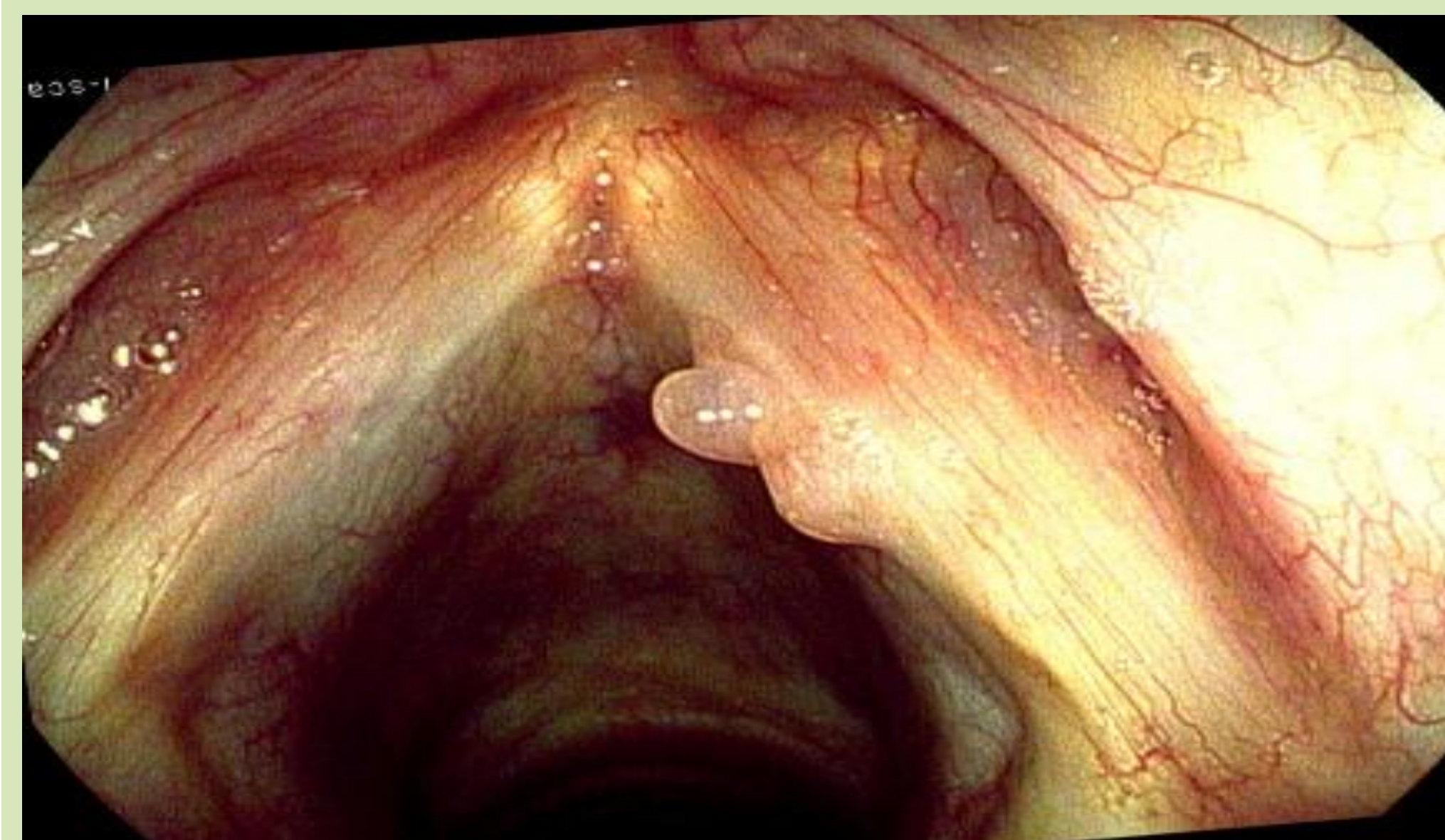
## Purpose Statement

The broad purpose of this study was to investigate and examine speech-language pathologists' (SLPs') diagnostic and therapeutic considerations for patients with a vocal polyp. More specifically, I examined speech-language pathologists' decision-making process regarding patient evaluation, treatment selection, timing of implementation, and perceptions of the effectiveness of different treatment techniques.

## Definition

*Vocal polyps* are a "typically unilateral, soft, fluid-filled growth on the anterior and middle third portion of the vocal fold edges," that effectively reduce a person's voice quality (Hegde, 2008b, p. 326).

## Hemorrhagic Unilateral Vocal Polyp

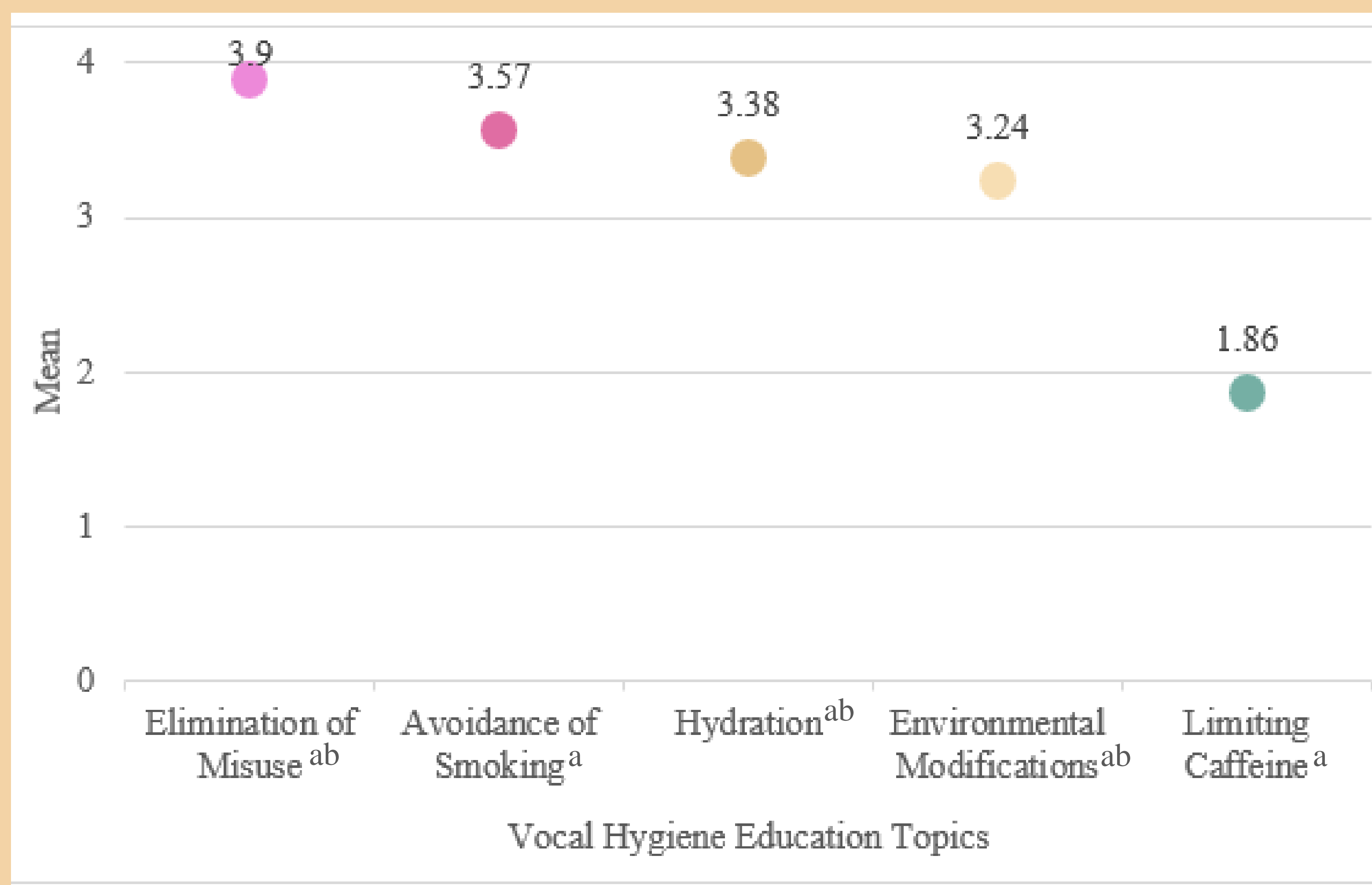


Note. From *Hemorrhagic vocal cord polyp*, n.d. (<https://old.voicedoctor.net/media/behavioral-injury-overdoer-central/polyps/hemorrhagic-vocal-cord-polyp-1/>).

## Methods

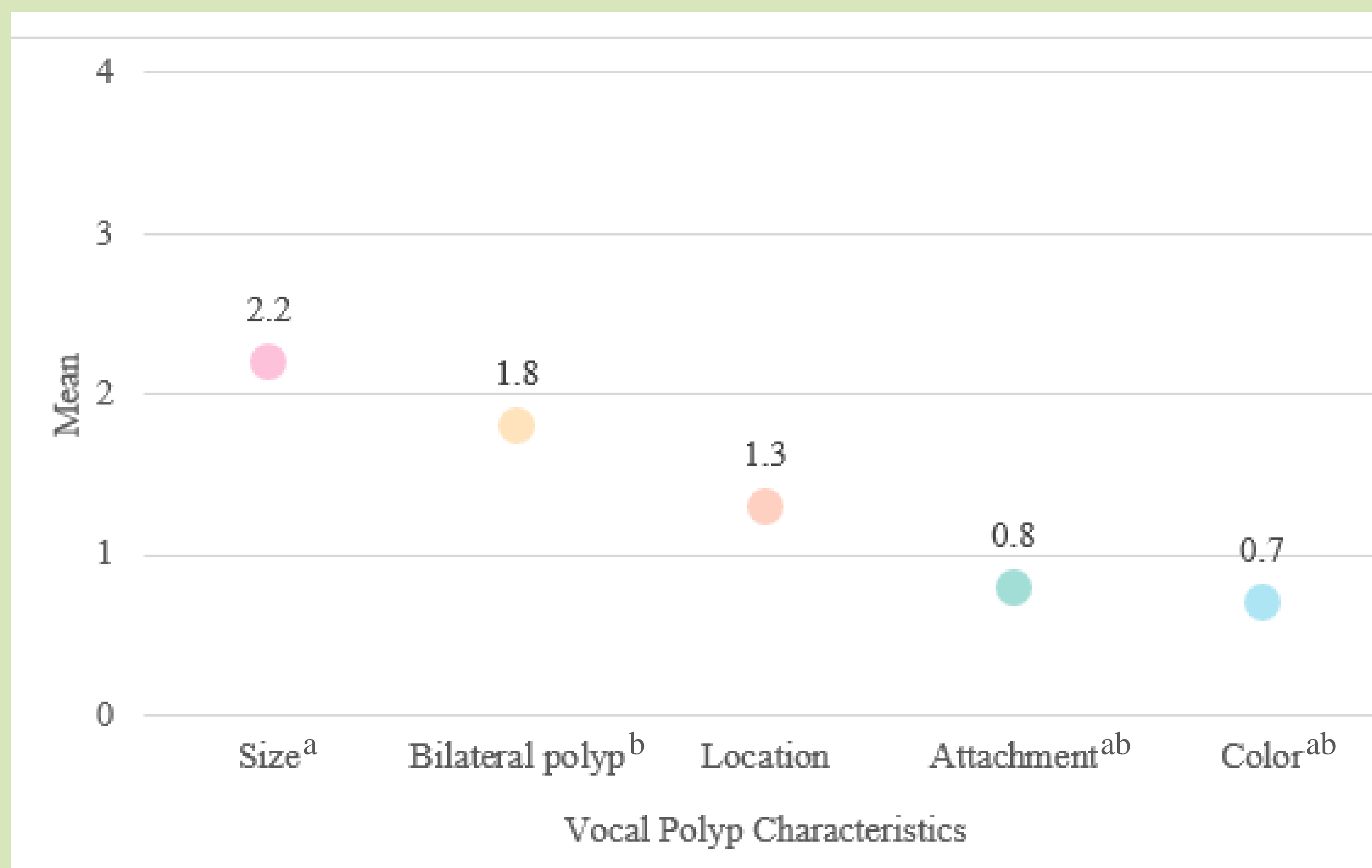
- 26 ASHA-certified SLPs participated.
- 35-question survey addressed:
  - Demographics
  - Patient Self-Assessment/Case History/Patient Interview
  - Perceptual & Physiological Measures
  - Imaging
  - Surgery & Vocal Rest
  - When does the SLP first see the patient?
  - Vocal Hygiene & Voice Therapy

## Participants' Perceived Importance of Vocal Hygiene Education Topics for Vocal Polyp Patients (n = 21)



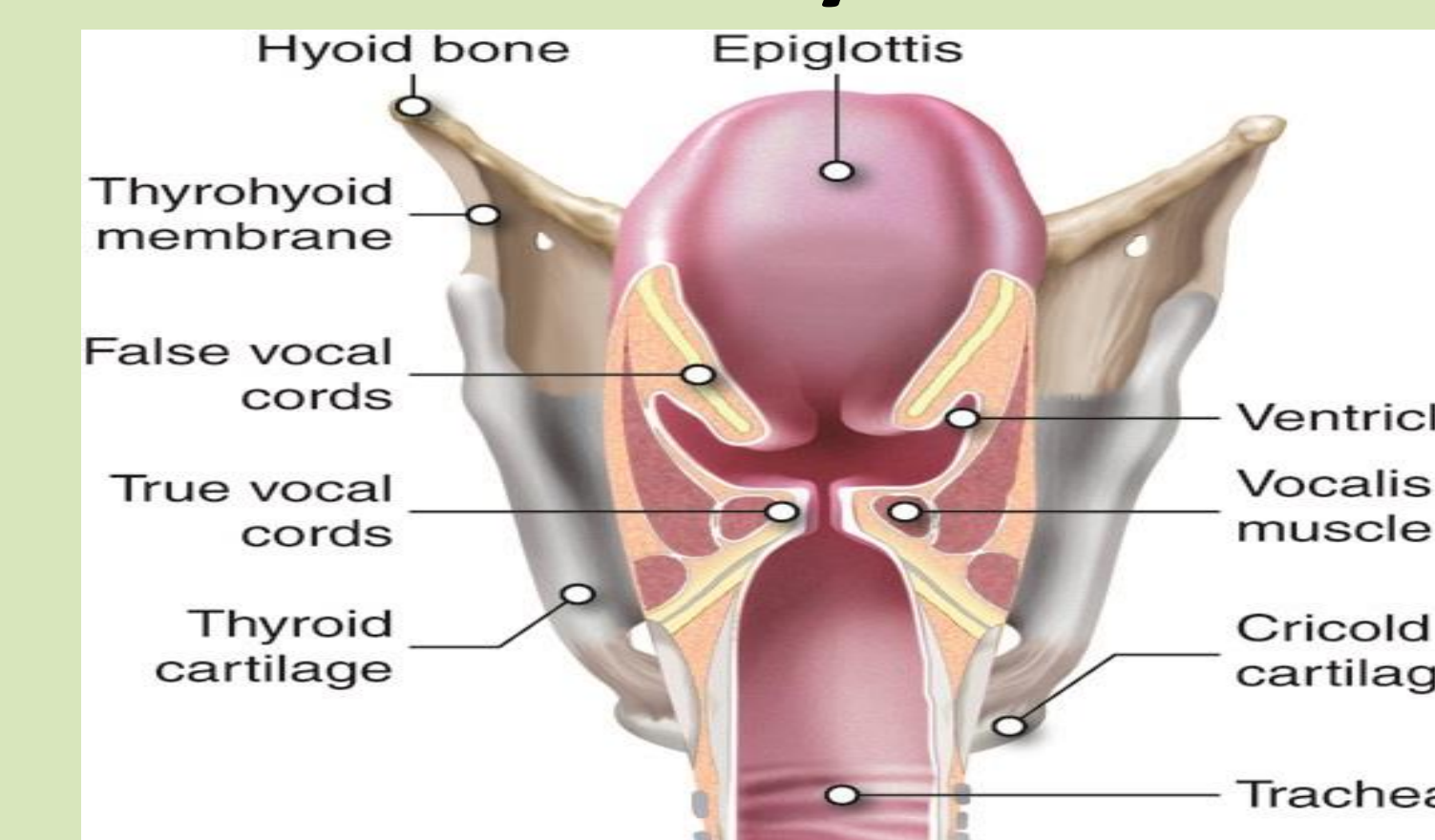
Note. *Elimination of Misuse* is a shortened label to fit the formatting of the figure and appeared within the survey as *Identification/Elimination of Misuse*. Items were coded using a scale where 0 represented *Not at all important*, 1 represented *Slightly important*, 2 represented *Moderately important*, 3 represented *Very important*, and 4 represented *Extremely important*. Like letters denote significant differences,  $p < .01$ .

## How Influential Vocal Polyp Characteristics are to Participants' Treatment Selection (n = 10)



Note. Items were coded using a scale where 0 represented *Not at all influential*, 1 represented *Slightly influential*, 2 represented *Moderately influential*, 3 represented *Very influential*, and 4 represented *Extremely influential*. Like letters denote significant differences,  $p < .01$ .

## Posterior View of the Larynx in the Frontal Plane



Note. From *Anatomytool and vocal cords English*, by Cenvéo, n.d. (<https://openverse.org/image/556f1623-150a-4e5c-b713-fdf5941be05f?q=vocal%20cords>). Creative Commons.

## Major Conclusions

1. There is a major difference of opinion regarding how influential certain aspects of treatment are to SLPs' recommendations and decision-making process for patients with a vocal polyp.
  - Participants had varied opinions on whether or not surgical technique affects their decision-making process.
  - Participants varied on whether or not preoperative vocal rest is recommended to patients with a vocal polyp.
  - Participants were quite evenly split on whether or not they consider the characteristics of a vocal polyp when selecting voice therapy techniques for their patients.
2. There are differences in how the morphological characteristics of a vocal polyp contribute to an SLPs' selection of therapeutic techniques.
  - The size of the vocal polyp was considered significantly more influential to the selection of therapeutic techniques than the attachment style and the color of the polyp.
  - The presence of a bilateral/contralateral vocal polyp was considered significantly more influential to the selection of therapeutic techniques than the attachment style and the color of the polyp.
3. SLPs consider vocal hygiene education to be an important part of treatment for patients with a vocal polyp.
  - All participants agreed that vocal hygiene education is a component of treatment for their patients with a vocal polyp.
  - Avoiding smoking, environmental modifications, hydration, and the identification and elimination of the vocal misuse were significantly more important than limiting caffeine intake.
  - The identification and elimination of the misuse was also significantly more important than environmental modifications and hydration.

## Reference

Hegde, M. N. (2008b). *Hegde's pocket guide to communication disorders*. Thomson Delmar Learning.