



RINKI VARINDANI DESAI, SLPD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S
Medical Speech-Language Pathologist
Board-Certified Dysphagia Specialist | Digital Health Consultant
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Medical speech-language pathologist and digital health specialist with 15+ years of expertise in clinical care, education, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Skilled in dysphagia management, cognitive rehabilitation, product management, and business development. Passionate about bridging clinical expertise with technology to advance innovation in healthcare and education. Dedicated to creating impactful, evidence-based solutions that empower clinicians, enhance patient outcomes, and expand access to high-quality care around the world.

EDUCATION

- **Doctor of Speech-Language Pathology** September 2025
Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions
- **Business Advantage Program for Healthcare Professionals** August 2021
Else School of Management
- **Master of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders** August 2011
University of Texas at Dallas | School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences
- **Bachelor of Science in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology** August 2009
Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Research Associate | MGH Institute of Health Professions** August 2024 – Present
- Conduct clinical research within the MGH Swallowing and Communication Collaborative Lab, focused on developing digital health solutions for individuals with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).
 - Support the design, development, and evaluation of patient-centered digital tools that enhance shared decision-making and integrate patient preferences into care strategies.
 - Collaborate with multidisciplinary teams of clinicians, engineers, and researchers to ensure solutions are clinically relevant, evidence-based, and accessible.
 - Collect, analyze, and synthesize provider, patient, and caregiver insights to inform product design, usability, and implementation in clinical settings.

- Founder | Theratactix Digital Health Consulting** December 2023 – Present
- Delivering clinical consulting services to businesses and organizations, focusing on creating solutions that empower clinicians, enhance patient outcomes, and drive transformative digital health innovations.
 - Leveraging clinical expertise and strategic insights to guide digital health product management, ensuring alignment with clinical practice realities and patient needs.
 - Providing tailored business development strategies to enhance operational efficiency, improve market positioning, and accelerate revenue growth for digital health companies, ensuring sustainable competitive advantage in the healthcare ecosystem.

Co-Founder and COO | Swallowing Training and Education Portal (STEP)**January 2018 – Present**

- Leading operations at STEP, a digital education platform for clinicians treating dysphagia, encompassing content development, digital marketing, product management, sales, and customer success.
- Driving business growth and expansion through strategic partnerships and product innovation.
- Overseeing end-to-end product development process to create clinically relevant solutions.

Outpatient Lead SLP and Clinical Instructor | University of Mississippi Medical Center**July 2019 – July 2023**

- Outpatient lead speech-language pathologist and instructor in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at an academic medical center, supervising students and managing a team of 5 SLPs.
- Delivered skilled clinical services to adults with various swallowing, speech, language, voice, and cognitive deficits in a multi-disciplinary outpatient hospital setting.
- Co-led the multidisciplinary ALS clinic, focusing on comprehensive care coordination and assistive technology solutions for individuals with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and their caregivers.

Speech-Language Pathologist and Regional Team Lead | HealthPRO Heritage**January 2016 – June 2019**

- Provided skilled medical SLP services to older adults, including assessment and treatment of cognitive-linguistic, speech, and swallowing impairments associated with stroke, dementia, and neurodegenerative diseases in assisted living, post-acute rehabilitation, and long-term care facilities in Texas and New York.
- Directed and managed a regional team of 30 clinicians, demonstrating leadership and management skills essential for driving operational excellence and enhanced clinical performance.

Speech-Language Pathologist | Select Medical**November 2011 – November 2015**

- Provided SLP services to adults with critical illnesses in an acute care hospital in Dallas, TX.
- Assisted with the development and implementation of inpatient Traumatic Brain Injury, Palliative Care, and FEES clinical programs as a member of the Clinical Programming and Medical Ethics committees.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

- Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Specialization | Stanford University
- Certificate in Digital Health | Harvard Medical School
- Digital Health Product Management | Stanford University
- Board Certified Specialist in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders | ABSSD
- Certified Brain Injury Specialist | Brain Injury Association of America
- Certified Dementia Practitioner | National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

- Career Transitions Program Mentor | ASHA 2024 – 2025
- Scientific Peer Review Training Committee | ASHA 2023 – 2024
- Scientific and Professional Education Board Member | ASHA 2022 – 2024
- President-Elect | Mississippi Speech-Language-Hearing-Association (MSHA) 2022 – 2023
- Co-Chair of International COVID-19 Task Force | Dysphagia Research Society 2020 – 2022
- Co-Chair of Communication and Public Relations | Dysphagia Research Society 2018 – 2020
- Associate Editor and CE Manager for SIG 13 Perspectives Journal | ASHA 2018 – 2020

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

- Healthcare Media Champion Award (2023) | American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- Healthcare Media Champion Award (2022) | American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- Extra Mile Award (2021) | UMMC Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
- Speech Therapist of the Year (2020) | UMMC Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
- Faculty Development Award (2019-2020) | American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Founder | [Medical SLP Forum](#)

Founder of the Medical SLP Forum, a global digital community of 50,000+ medical speech-language pathologists to connect, collaborate, and share resources related to clinical practice and patient care.

Co-Lead | [Bitelabs Digital Health, AI, & Innovation Fellowship](#)

Co-lead of the Bitelabs Digital Health & Innovation Fellowship in the US, helping clinicians upskill in digital health and become leaders and innovators in healthtech.

Co-Creator | [Dysphagia Therapy Mobile App](#)

Co-creator of iOS and Android mobile app Dysphagia Therapy - an evidence-based app to educate and support speech-language pathologists assessing and treating swallowing disorders in adults.

Co-Founder and Board Member | [Burgundy and White](#)

Board Member and Co-Founder of Burgundy and White, a non-profit organization and educational resource for individuals and families impacted by head and neck cancer.

Co-Founder and Board Member | [Indian Society of Feeding and Swallowing](#)

Board Member and Co-Founder of SFSD, an organization and educational resource for patients and healthcare professionals involved in managing feeding and swallowing disorders in India.

Clinical Educator and Researcher

Actively engaged in clinical education and research initiatives, writing and publishing articles to share clinical insights, and serving as an expert speaker at various national and international healthcare meetings.

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS:

- Miles, A., Connor, N. P., **Desai, R. V.**, Jadcherla, S., Allen, J., ... & Langmore, S. E. (2021). Dysphagia care across the continuum: a multidisciplinary dysphagia research society taskforce report of service-delivery during the COVID-19 global pandemic. *Dysphagia*, 36, 170-182.
- **Varindani Desai, R.**, & Namasivayam-MacDonald, A. (2020). Practice patterns of speech-language pathologists managing dysphagia in dementia: A cross-sectional survey in the United States. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 5(6), 1631-1646.
- Rangarathnam, B., & **Desai, R. V.** (2020). A preliminary survey of dysphagia practice patterns among SLPs in India. *Journal of Indian Speech Language & Hearing Association*, 34(2), 259.
- McCoy, Y. M., & **Varindani Desai, R.** (2018). Presbyphagia versus dysphagia: identifying age-related changes in swallow function. *Perspectives of ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 3(15), 15-21.