

Teleaudiology Today: Revolutionizing Hearing Care Practices

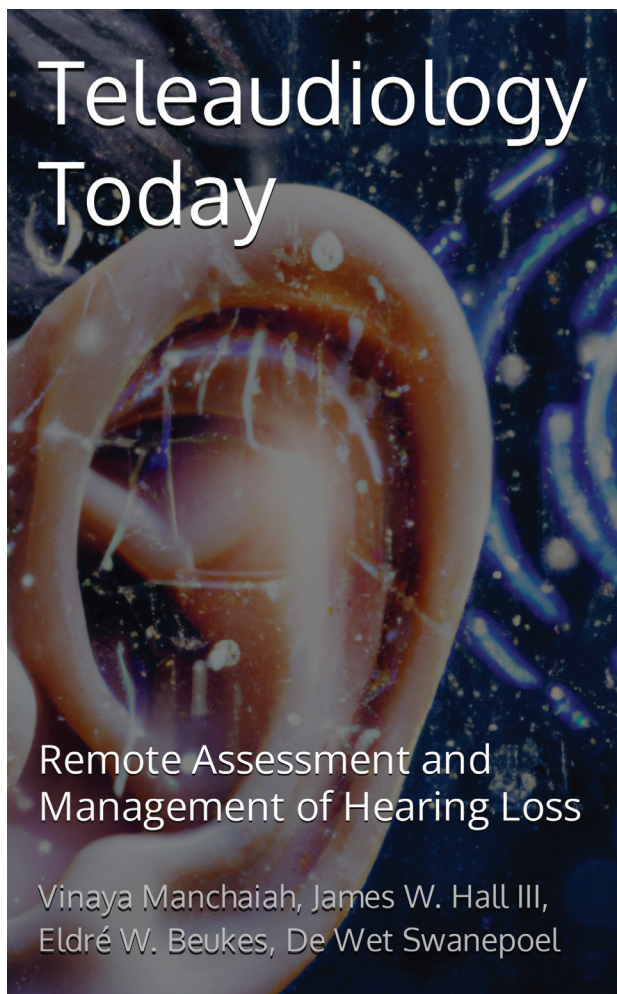
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In recent times, teleaudiology has emerged as a critical field in audiology, gaining unprecedented momentum due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the world faced these unique challenges, the audiology profession experienced a pressing need for innovation, particularly in the realm of teleaudiology. Though the technology and the concept had been available, its urgency and importance skyrocketed due to the restrictive physical distancing measures. Major strides were taken in the development and expansion of teleaudiology practices, significantly enhancing clinician and patient openness to this approach to service delivery. As editors of "Teleaudiology Today: Remote Assessment and Management of Hearing Loss," we recognized the growing demand for practical guidance in this area. Our book is therefore designed as a practical guide that offers a comprehensive overview of teleaudiology focusing on adults with hearing loss, aiming to serve as a crucial resource for audiologists and students navigating the changing landscape of hearing care.

TELEAUDIOLOGY ADOPTION

Teleaudiology not only overcame physical barriers but also played a pivotal role in maintaining continuity of care during times of social distancing. A significant portion of our book is dedicated to addressing the technological barriers in adopting teleaudiology. We firmly believe that with adequate support and training, even those with limited digital exposure can become adept at using teleaudiology tools and techniques. This belief is rooted in the historical transition of the general public towards technologies such as online banking and social media, demonstrating a remarkable capacity for technological acclimatization.

Despite the technological orientation of audiology, its integration of teleaudiology has been comparatively slower than other health care domains. This slower pace can be attributed to several factors: a perceived technological ineptitude among the older population (which forms a significant portion of audiology patients), concerns about additional costs, limited exposure in educational curriculums, and policy challenges, particularly concerning reimbursement.



We provide a good overview of teleaudiology approaches that are currently used and/or upcoming as well as delve deep into the extensive implications of teleaudiology in our book. Far beyond basic screening and diagnosis, teleaudiology



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encompasses a wide array of services, including counseling, decision-making, and rehabilitation. The effective delivery of these services remotely necessitates a nuanced understanding of both the potential and limitations of teleaudiology. It's crucial for practitioners to tailor their approach to each patient, ensuring a personalized and effective treatment plan.

THE FUTURE OF TELEAUDIOLOGY

Looking forward, the landscape of teleaudiology is not just promising but ripe for transformative shifts. Innovations such as direct-to-consumer (DTC) service delivery models and over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids are reshaping how audiology services are delivered. Particularly exciting is the potential intersection of artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) with teleaudiology. These technological advancements hint at the possibility of tools like Chatbots, which could provide 24/7 service and drastically enhance patient care and accessibility. The integration of AI could lead to more personalized hearing care plans and automated adjustments in hearing aids, enhancing the user experience.

The future of teleaudiology also lies in its ability to transcend traditional barriers, reaching populations that have previously been underserved due to geographical or financial constraints. The integration of teleaudiology into mainstream practice will not only enhance the efficiency of hearing care but also make it more inclusive and accessible.

GLOBAL IMPACT AND MISSION

"Teleaudiology Today" is more than a textbook; it's a part of a global mission. With an affordable pricing strategy (\$9.99 for Kindle, \$19.99 for paperback) and a commitment to channeling all proceeds towards clinical research in sub-Saharan Africa, our book aims to support the gap in global audiology resources. We are dedicated to ensuring that the benefits of teleaudiology reach beyond high-income settings, extending to regions where hearing care is still a luxury. The proceeds will fund projects focusing on developing affordable hearing care solutions and training local health care professionals in teleaudiology techniques.

We anticipate periodic updates to the book, reflecting the dynamic nature of teleaudiology. We welcome feedback from our readers, which will be crucial in shaping future editions and ensuring the book remains a relevant and up-to-date resource.

In conclusion, through "Teleaudiology Today," we aim to guide audiologists and students through the evolving landscape of digital hearing care. As we navigate the new normal in a post-pandemic world, our collective efforts in creating this book are geared towards expanding access, embracing innovation, and improving the quality of hearing care across the globe. 