



# **IDENTIFICATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS IN MAURITIUS**

BY

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## SUMMARY

TITLE: IDENTIFICATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS IN MAURITIUS

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Early identification of hearing loss followed by a timely and effective intervention programme for children with hearing impairment is necessary to minimise the negative effects of hearing loss on the development of cognition, psychosocial and verbal communication skills. Such early intervention programmes need to be multidisciplinary, technologically sound and take cognisance of the context in which the child and family function.

The main aim of this study is to obtain accurate and reliable baseline information regarding current status of the intervention process for children with hearing loss in Mauritius, a developing country. An exploratory, descriptive qualitative research design is selected to achieve this aim. Questionnaire-based interviews were carried out to obtain information from 37 hearing impaired children's parents regarding the median ages of suspicion of hearing loss, diagnosis and placement of hearing aids. The referral

process, diagnosis and the management of these children is described.

The findings indicate that children in the study were identified late [median age 24 months] and that the management process is fragmented. The strengths in the current identification and follow-up process namely, parental involvement and established public service structure are highlighted. The weaknesses in the current system are identified, for example, time lapses in identification process, provision of hearing aids and lack of co-ordinated services.

The theoretical and empirical research carried out forms the basis of recommendations that have practical implications for an early intervention programme for children with hearing loss in Mauritius.

*Key words: Pre-lingual hearing loss; Prevention; Screening; Age of suspicion of hearing loss; Early intervention; Age of diagnosis of hearing loss; Management of hearing loss; Mainstreaming; Communication skills.*



## OPSOMMING

Vroeë identifikasie van gehoorverlies gevolg deur 'n tydige en effektiewe intervensieprogram by kinders met 'n gehoorverlies is noodsaaklik om die negatiewe invloed van gehoorverlies op kognitiewe ontwikkeling, psigososiale en verbale kommunikasievaardighede so gering as moontlik te maak. Sodanige vroeë intervensieprogramme moet multidissiplinêr en tegnologies weldeurdag wees en moet die konteks waarbinne die kind en sy gesin funksioneer in aanmerking neem.

Die hoofdoel van hierdie studie is om akkurate en betroubare basislyninligting in te samel oor die huidige status van die intervensieproses by kinders met 'n gehoorverlies in Mauritius, wat 'n ontwikkelende land is. Om hierdie doelstelling te bereik is 'n Onderzoekende, beskrywende kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gekies. Onderhoude gebaseer op vraelyste is uitgevoer om inligting te verkry van die ouers van 37 kinders met gehoorverlies. Die inligting het sentreer rondom die gemiddelde ouderdomme waarop gehoorverlies vermoed is, diagnose en passing van gehoorapparate. Die verwysingsproses, diagnose en behartiging ten opsigte van hierdie kinders word beskryf.

Die bevindinge dui aan dat die kinders wat by die studie betrek was, laat geïdentifiseer is (gemiddelde ouderdom 24 maande) en dat die behartigingsproses gefragmenteerd is. Die sterk punte in die huidige identifikasie- en opvolgproses word uitgelig en die swak punte word geïdentifiseer. Die teoretiese en empiriese navorsing wat uitgevoer is vorm die basis vir aanbevelings wat praktiese



implikasies het vir 'n program van vroeë intervensie by kinders met 'n gehoorverlies in Mauritius.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Prelinguale gehoorverlies; voorkoming sifting ouderdom waarop gehoorverlies vermoed word; vroeë intervensie; ouderdom waarop gehoorverlies gediagnoseer word; behartiging van gehoorverlies; hoofstroming; kommunikasievaardighede.

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