

Interventions following hearing screening in adults – Looking ahead based on interventions performed

M. Pronk (1), S. Kramer (1), A. Davis (2), D. Stephens (3), P. Smith (2,4), C. Thodi (5), L. Anteunis (6), M. Parazzini (7), F. Grandori (7)

(1) Department of ENT/Audiology, VU University Medical Center, EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research, Amsterdam

(2) MRC Hearing and Communication Group, Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, London

(3) Department of Psychological Medicine and Neurology,

Background:

Adult hearing screening may be a solution to the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of hearing loss in (older) adults. Limited use and satisfaction with hearing aids indicate that consideration of alternative interventions following hearing screening may be needed. The aim of this study was to provide an overview of all types of intervention that have been offered to adults in a general population who fail a screen.

Methods:

Systematic literature review. Articles were identified through systematic searches in PubMed, EMBASE, Cinahl, the Cochrane Library, private libraries and through reference checking. Relevant screening programme characteristics were extracted by two independent researchers.

Results:

Of the initial 3027 papers obtained from the searches, a total of 37 were found to be eligible. The great majority (i.e., 26) of the screening programmes referred screen-failures to a hearing specialist without further rehabilitation being specified. Most of the others (i.e., 7) led to provision of hearing aids. A handful studies offered alternatives to the hearing aid referrals/interventions, of which three offered communication programme elements (i.e., speechreading and counseling, advice on hearing tactics) and one offered environmental aids.

Conclusions:

Interventions following hearing screening generally comprised referrals to hearing specialists or directly offered hearing aid rehabilitation. A few programmes offered alternatives containing communication programme elements or other amplification strategies. It is argued that these may be valuable as an addition or replacement of hearing aid rehabilitation. Further recommendations for future research will be made. This work was performed in the framework of the European project "AHEAD III: Assessment of Hearing in the Elderly: Aging and Degeneration - Integration through Immediate Intervention (2008-2011) (FP7, contract No.HEALTH-F2-2008-200835)".

