

Clinic Based Hearing Screening Protocols: The Feasibility of Implementing the Health
Professions Council of South Africa Year 2007 Guidelines

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by

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Declaration

I, Luisa Petrocchi-Bartal, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. I alone am responsible for the content of this study and the conclusions presented. No part of this dissertation has been previously submitted for a degree at any other University.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Luisa Petrocchi-Bartal

In loving memory of my grandmother, Nadia (nee Bethlehem) Koz, whose light shines eternally.

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Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Excerpts	ix
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	x
List of Abbreviations	xii
Abstract	xiii
Chapter 1: Background and Rationale	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	6
2.1 The Importance of Hearing Function in Childhood Development	6
2.2 Prevalence of Hearing Loss	7
2.3 Early Intervention	9
2.4 EHDI Challenges and Recommendations	13
2.5 Sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa Contextualised	16
2.6 South African Social Development, Education, and Health Care Policies	17
2.7 South African Context Specific EHDI Challenges and Suitability	27
2.8 JCIH and HPCSA - A Developed World Versus Developing World Comparison	29
2.9 South Africa – EHDI Research Review	34
Chapter 3: Methodology	42
3.1 Aims	42
3.1.1 Primary aim.	42
3.1.2 Specific objectives.	42
3.2 Research Questions	43
3.3 Research Design	44

3.4	Description of Participants	45
3.4.1	The sample.	45
3.4.2	Sample size, distribution and sampling procedure.	47
3.4.3	Participants.	48
3.4.3.1	<i>Participant selection – inclusion/exclusion criteria.</i>	48
3.5	Test Protocol	50
3.5.1	Material and apparatus.	50
3.5.2	Procedures.	52
3.5.3	Recruitment of participants.	53
3.5.4	Ethical considerations.	53
3.6	Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures	55
3.7	Reliability and Validity	61
3.7.1	Pilot project.	61
3.7.2	Participants.	63
3.7.3	The interview and questionnaire.	63
3.7.4	Method of evaluation.	65
3.7.5	Threats to reliability and validity.	65
3.7.5.1	<i>Participants, sample and sampling procedure.</i>	65
3.7.5.2	<i>The interview and questionnaire.</i>	67
Chapter 4:	Results and Discussion	68
4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	Participant Demographics	69
4.3	Prevalence of Newborn and Infant Hearing Screening Conducted at MCWH Primary Health Care Immunisation Clinics	72
4.4	Hearing Screening Procedures and Protocols in use at MCWH Immunisation Clinics	76
4.4.1	Otoscope availability.	76
4.4.2	Otoscope usage.	76
4.4.3	Evaluative methods other than otoscopic evaluation to assess risk for hearing loss.	80

4.4.3.1	<i>Environmental sounds incorporating noisemaker and/or verbal stimuli (N=29).</i>	80
4.4.3.2	<i>Reviewing medical records and conducting caregiver interviews (N=30).</i>	81
4.4.4	Referrals emanating from evaluative methods/instruments used other than otoscopic evaluation to assess risk for hearing loss.	83
4.5	Possible Concomitant Personnel Associated Factors which may influence the Implementation of Newborn and Infant Screening Programmes at North West and Gauteng Immunisation Clinics	85
4.5.1	Community based primary health care workers' knowledge of hearing impairment.	85
4.5.1.1	<i>Hearing screening protocol details reflective of respondent knowledge base.</i>	87
4.5.1.2	<i>Perceived causality of hearing loss reflective of repondents' knowledge base.</i>	87
4.5.1.3	<i>Caregiver interviews reflective of respondents' knowledge base.</i>	88
4.5.1.4	<i>General factors reflective of respondents' knowledge base</i>	88
4.5.2	Community based primary health care workers' knowledge on ear infections in children.	92
4.5.3	Community based primary health care workers' perceptions and attitudes towards hearing impairment.	95
4.5.4	Community based primary health care workers' willingness to conduct hearing screening.	97
4.5.5	Nursing training.	100
4.6	Other Factors that May Influence Implementation of Newborn and/or Infant Hearing Screening at North West and Gauteng Immunisation Clinics	102
4.6.1	Patient return rates for immunisations versus return rates for appointments other than immunisations.	102
4.6.1.1	<i>Patient return rates for immunisations.</i>	102
4.6.1.2	<i>Patient return rates for appointments other than immunisations.</i>	106

4.6.2	Logistics.	107
4.6.2.1	<i>Immunisation day.</i>	107
4.6.2.2	<i>Clinic noise and clinic space.</i>	109
4.6.2.3	<i>Clinic booking system.</i>	111
4.6.2.4	<i>Infant record documentation.</i>	114
4.6.3	Workload pressures associated with understaffing.	116
4.6.3.1	<i>Burden of disease.</i>	116
4.6.3.2	<i>Most common infant medical issues.</i>	117
4.6.3.3	<i>Disability.</i>	122
4.6.3.4	<i>As burden of disease relates to staffing pressures.</i>	126
4.6.4	Parental awareness, willingness, and education.	130
4.7	Comparison of Any Hearing Screening Procedures and Protocols in Use to the HPCSA (2007) EHDI Position Statement Guidelines and Associated Clinic Benchmarks	133
4.8	Summary	142
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications		149
5.1	Critical Evaluation of the Study	156
5.1.1	Study Limitations	156
5.1.2	Study Strengths	157
5.2	Final Comments	158
References		159
Appendices:		172
Appendix A: Information and Consent to Partake in a Research Project		172
Appendix B: Questionnaire		177
Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Certificate - University of the Witwatersrand		188
Appendix D: Approval to Conduct the Research - Gauteng Provincial Government		190
Appendix E: Approval to Conduct the Research - North West Provincial Government		194
Appendix F: Approval to Conduct the Research - City of Johannesburg		199
		viii

Appendix G: Approval to Conduct the Research - West Rand	201
Appendix H: Approval to Conduct the Research - Kenneth Kaunda District	203

List of Excerpts

Excerpt 1: <i>The Primary Health Care Package – A Set of Norms and Standards, Prevention of Hearing Loss due to Otitis Media at Clinic Level (DoH, 2001)</i>	19
Excerpt 2: <i>National Health System Guidelines for the Prevention of Hearing Impairment due to Otitis media at Clinic Level – Acute Otitis Media and Diagnosis Thereof (DoH, 2005)</i>	21
Excerpt 3: <i>National Health System Guidelines for the Prevention of Hearing Impairment due to Otitis media at Clinic Level - Referrals (DoH, 2005)</i>	22
Excerpt 4: <i>National Health System Guidelines for the Prevention of Hearing Impairment due to Otitis media at Clinic Level – Follow-Up (DoH, 2005)</i>	22
Excerpt 5: <i>National Health System Guidelines for the Prevention of Hearing Impairment due to Otitis media at Clinic Level – Voice Test and Swart Questionnaire (DoH, 2005)</i>	23
Excerpt 6: <i>Road to Health Chart – Guidelines for Health Workers: Visual/Hearing Screening (DoH, 2004)</i>	25

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1: Distribution of Interviewees According to Official Job Title per District</i>	71
<i>Figure 2: Otoscope Usage on Children Below 5 Years of Age</i>	77

List of Tables

Table 1	<i>Participant Demographics in Relation to District and Deprivational Index Standing [Community Survey (2007), Day & Gray, (2008)]</i>	70
Table 2	<i>Prevalence of Newborn/Infant Hearing Screening (N/IHS) and Rationale (N=30)</i>	72
Table 3	<i>Prevalence of Newborn/Infant Hearing Screening (N/IHS) and Rationale – Human Resource Reasons Provided (N=30)</i>	74
Table 4	<i>Themes Identified Regarding Otoscope Usage on Some Babies (N=23)</i>	78
Table 5	<i>Themes Identified Regarding Participant Knowledge of Hearing Impairment (in infants ≤ 1 year) (N=30)</i>	86
Table 6	<i>Participant Knowledge of Hearing Impairment (in infants ≤ 1 year) as Reflected in Factors which May Negatively Impact a Hearing Screening Programme (N=30)</i>	89
Table 7	<i>Themes Identified Pertaining to Participant Knowledge of Ear Infections in Children (in infants ≤ 1 year) (N=30)</i>	93
Table 8	<i>Themes Identified Pertaining to Participant Views on Hearing Impairment (N=30)</i>	96
Table 9	<i>Themes Identified Pertaining to Participant Willingness to Implement Newborn/Infant Hearing Screening (N/HIS), (N=30)</i>	98
Table 10	<i>Reported Nursing Training Received (N=30)</i>	101
Table 11	<i>Estimated Immunisation Return Rates (N=30)</i>	103
Table 12	<i>Themes Revealed Pertaining to Immunisation Return Rates (N=30)</i>	105
Table 13	<i>Immunisation Day (N=30)</i>	108
Table 14	<i>Themes Revealed Pertaining to Availability of an Appropriate Hearing Screening Area (N=30)</i>	110
Table 15	<i>Prompting Caregivers to Return with Infants for Follow-up (N=30)</i>	112
Table 16	<i>Infant Record Documentation (N=30)</i>	115
Table 17	<i>PHC Most Common Infant Medical Health Issues (excluding Ear Infections) Estimate (N=30)</i>	119

Table 18	<i>PHC Most Common Infant Ear Related Medical Health Issues Estimates (N=30)</i>	121
Table 19	<i>PHC Most Common Infant Disability Issues (excluding Sight, Hearing and Communication) Estimates (N=30)</i>	123
Table 20	<i>PHC Most Common Infant Sight, Hearing, Communication Disability Issues Estimates (N=30)</i>	125
Table 21	<i>Perceived Caregiver Factors which May Negatively Impact a Hearing Screening Programme(N=30)</i>	132
Table 22	<i>Assets for Implementation of HPCSA (2007) EHDI Clinic Hearing Screening Protocols</i>	137
Table 23	<i>Barriers to Implementation of HPCSA (2007) EHDI Clinic Hearing Screening Protocols</i>	140
Table 24	<i>Summary of Results according to Specific Objectives</i>	143

List of Abbreviations

AABR:	Automated Auditory Brainstem Response
AAP:	American Academy of Paediatrics
ANC:	African National Congress
ASHA:	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
BCG:	Bacille Colmette-Guerin
BFHI:	Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
CDC:	Centre for Disease Control
DoH:	Department of Health
DPOAE:	Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions
DPT1	Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tetanus
EHDI:	Early Hearing Detection and Intervention
ENT:	Ear Nose and Throat
EPI:	Expanded Programme on Immunisation
GP:	Gauteng Province
GP-COJ:	Gauteng Province - City of Johannesburg
GP-R/M:	Gauteng Province - Randfontein/Mogale
HPCSA:	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HR:	Human Resources
IGCH:	International Working Group on Infant Hearing
IMCI:	Integrated Management on Childhood Illnesses
JCIH:	Joint Committee on Infant Hearing
MCWH:	Mother Woman and Child Health
NECP:	National Ear Care Programme
NHS:	Newborn Hearing Screening
NICU:	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NIH:	National Institute of Health
N/IHS:	Newborn or Infant Hearing Screening
NW:	North West Province
NW-M:	North West - Merafong
NW-P:	North West - Potchefstroom
OAE:	Otoacoustic Emission
PCEHL:	Permanent Early Onset Hearing Loss
PHC:	Primary Health Care
RtHC:	Road to Health Chart
TEOAE:	Transient Otoacoustic Emissions
UHS:	Universal Hearing Screening
UNHS:	Universal Newborn Hearing Screening
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
URTI:	Upper Respiratory Tract Infection
WHO:	World Health Organisation

Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to assess the feasibility of implementation of the Health Professions Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) clinic-based hearing screening subsection of its 2007 Position Statement on Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programmes in South Africa. Specific sub-aims included (a) establishing the prevalence of hearing screening conducted at Maternal Child Woman's Health (MCWH) immunisation clinics; (b) determining the hearing screening procedures and protocols in use at MCWH immunisation clinics; (c) determining and exploring the possible concomitant personnel-associated factors which may influence the implementation of newborn and infant hearing screening programmes; (d) determining and exploring other factors that may have influenced implementation of newborn and infant hearing screening; and lastly, (e) comparing any hearing screening procedures and protocols in use to the HPCSA (2007) EHDI position statement clinic guidelines and associated clinic benchmarks

Participants: Thirty primary healthcare immunisation clinic managers/acting managers were interviewed in two South African sample groups, in the North West province (NW) and Gauteng (GP).

Design: An exploratory, non-experimental, qualitative research design was employed incorporating both quantitative and qualitative information within the two sample groups.

Methods and Materials: An interview using a questionnaire was administered with primary health care (PHC) clinic nursing manager/acting manager, placed within the identified sites. The questionnaire encompassed areas such as work contexts, hearing screening contexts and information management systems, as well as quality control measures in place at these clinics.

Data Analysis: Content analysis was used to code emergent themes into specific categories. Frequency calculations of the emergent themes were calculated and results described qualitatively.

Results: No PHC clinics placed within the identified sites offered or provided formalised newborn/infant hearing screening and none of these facilities had equipment to do so. Most sites attributed the lack of formalised hearing screening to budgetary and human resource issues, staff training in particular. Non-formalised hearing screening protocols in place demonstrated inconsistencies in application across districts and none complied with HPCSA (2007) clinic

guidelines. Most respondents were willing to implement formalised hearing screening to coincide with their immunisation schedules. The immunisation context was considered favourable for implementation of formalised hearing screening. Other factors such as reduced parental awareness of the importance of hearing screening, and caregiver cultural issues were considered surmountable by respondents.

Conclusions: HPCSA (2007) implementation of clinic hearing screening protocols at PHC immunization clinics (level one) does not appear to be feasible based on current evidence. Results from the current study have assisted in identifying procedural and logistical assets and barriers to implementation of HPCSA (2007) clinic guidelines for EHDI at immunisation clinics in South Africa. Future research implications include formal investigations of central directorate versus district differences in PHC Package Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI); Otitis Media, and Road to Health Chart (RtHC) protocols; provincial and district inequities in funding as they impinge on hearing health care service delivery; costing of rudimentary protocols in place versus formalised HPCSA (2007) EHDI service delivery; research into parental awareness, education and willingness in specific reference to certain procedures such as otoacoustic emissions; and replication of the current study throughout the country for quantitative data with increased ability to draw causal inferences and generalize findings.

Keywords: Health Professions Council of South Africa; early hearing detection and intervention; primary healthcare immunisation clinics; interview