

RESULTS OF MULTICHANNEL COCHLEAR IMPLANTATION IN VERY YOUNG CHILDREN

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Most researchers and clinicians working in the cochlear implant field have assumed that profoundly deaf children will have a better prognosis in terms of speech perception, speech production and language development, if implanted at as young an age as possible. However, it has been difficult to gather direct evidence for this hypothesis due to the problems in assessing children under the age of five years with formal tests. Recent results with older children have supported the view that early implantation may provide the optimal outcome in most cases. The implantation of very young children raises two areas of concern that do not apply in adults and older children: accurate assessment of degree of hearing loss and auditory potential; and postoperative assessment of outcomes. This paper will describe research results from the University of Melbourne which address these issues and present results for children implanted as young as eighteen months of age.



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Title:

Results of multichannel cochlear implantation in very young children [Abstract]

Date:

1995

Citation:

Dettman, S., Dowell, R., Barker, E., Rance, G., Hollow, R., Cowan, R., et al. (1995). Results of multichannel cochlear implantation in very young children [Abstract]. In Abstracts of 3rd International Congress on Cochlear Implant, Paris.

Persistent Link:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/26920>

File Description:

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