

SPEECH PERCEPTION BENEFITS FOR IMPLANTED CHILDREN WITH PREOPERATIVE RESIDUAL HEARING

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Since the implantation of the first children with the Nucleus 22-channel cochlear prosthesis in Melbourne in 1985, there has been rapid expansion in the number of implanted children world-wide. Improved surgical technique and experience in paediatric assessment and management have contributed to a trend to implant very young children. At the same time there has also been continuing development of improved speech processing strategies resulting in greater speech perception benefits. In the Melbourne program, over 60% of children obtain significant scores on open-set word and sentence tests using their cochlear implant alone *without the aid of lipreading*. As parents and professionals have become aware of these improved benefits to speech perception benefits in profoundly deaf children, there have been requests to consider implanting severely-to-profoundly deaf children. In these children with higher levels of residual hearing, only those children with poorer-than-expected performance on speech perception tests using hearing aids have been considered for surgery. A number of such cases have now been implanted in the Melbourne program. The speech perception benefits for this group are reported and are being compared with benefits for the profoundly deaf group of children.



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