

SPEECH PERCEPTION & INDIRECT BENEFITS FOR SEVERELY HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN USING COCHLEAR IMPLANTS.

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The benefits to speech perception, speech production, communication, and quality of life were investigated for severely hearing impaired children using cochlear implants and hearing aids. For the youngest children, assessments of psychological status, and use of a battery of cognitive and language tests were important factors in determining performance benefits prior to the child developing speech. For older children, the effects of increased one-to-one oral habilitation, and systematic encouragement of parental involvement were also investigated. Results suggested that parental support for consistent device use was an important factor in producing outcomes. Children with residual hearing were more likely to achieve open-set perception.

Each child was also assessed for changes in quality of life, through use of a standardized health utility instrument. Results from the group were collated, and teamed with a costing assessment for the procedure, which allowed a complete cost-utility analysis to be completed. Results suggested that indirect benefits, such as the effects on speech production, usual activities, lower concentration, and less distress were ranked as more important than changes to hearing in a number of the children. Costs per QALY were consistent with those reported in the literature, and suggested that the cochlear implant is highly cost-effective as a medical technology.



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