

THE PATTERN OF IDENTIFICATION OF HEARING LOSS AND HEARING AID USAGE AMONG CHILDREN

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The purpose of this study was to know the pattern of identification of hearing loss and hearing aid usage among hearing impaired children. This study consisted of 136 children who were diagnosed to have hearing loss and attended Audiology and Speech Science Clinic (KASP), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1998. It was found that the age of suspicion of hearing loss among subjects was 1.67 years old (20 months) and age of identification was 2.42 years old (29 months). Results showed a delay in identification of hearing loss among children. It happened up to 100 months (median 6 months). The causes of the delay were: (1) parents didn't know exactly reasons for the delay (22.86%); (2) parents unsure about child's hearing status (22.86%); (3) the doctor was late in referring the child for hearing assessment (28.57%); (4) very long waiting period (14.28%); (5) parents had problem with transportation (2.86%), and (6) parents didn't know about the place for assessment (8.57%). Data analysis showed the age of identification was influenced by individual who suspect the hearing loss in children, source of referral and aetiology of hearing loss in subject. However, it was not depend on the degree of hearing loss and additional handicapped. There were 87 of 136 subject has been fitted with hearing aid, but only 30 has used it consistently. For the rest, they either using it inconsistently or totally reject the hearing aid. The parents reported that their child not comfortable with the quality of sounds produced by hearing aid and some of them were uncomfortable with the earmoulds itself. However, it was also reported that some of the parents do not want their child using the hearing aid because they believed that it would damage their child's residual hearing.

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