



Persatuan Pertuturan-Bahasa & Pendengaran Malaysia
Malaysian Association of Speech-Language & Hearing (MASH)
Peti Surat 610, Pejabat Pos Jalan Sultan, 46770 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Email: thesecretary@mash.org.my Website: <http://mash.org.my/>

Date: 25th April 2020

Dear MASH Members,

RECOMMENDATION FOR COVID-19

We are currently on Phase 3 and then Phase 4 (effective Apr 29, 2020) of Movement Control Order in Malaysia as a measure to curb the infection rate of Covid-19. It is still unclear if the MCO will be lifted in the near future or other measures might be taken by the government in view of the continued worldwide increase of new cases. In Malaysia, although Audiology and Speech-Language Therapy services fall under essential category as part of healthcare services, all non-critical contact has been advised to be postponed. Certain area of services, especially in hospitals, is expected to be continued for urgent cases and continuity of care.

At this stage, MASH is recommending the following:-

1. The use of telehealth tools as an alternative to face-to-face consultation and therapy sessions. Telehealth should be the primary method chosen as it guarantees zero transmission of the SARS-COV 2019. This is in view of asymptomatic cases and mild symptom that can be missed and expose the clinician to infection, thus increasing the risk of clinician subsequently infecting other patients. As healthcare professionals, we must hold ourselves to the mandate of “First, do no harm”.

Please review this links that offer excellent guide for our professions to practise telehealth:-

- i. Royal College of Speech Language Therapists, UK
<https://www.rcslt.org/members/delivering-quality-services/telehealth/telehealth-guidance>
 - ii. Speech Pathology Australia
https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/SPAweb/Resources_for_Speech_Pathologists/Professional_Resources/HTML/Telepractice_Resources.aspx#rsd
 - iii. American Academy of Audiology
https://www.audiology.org/practice_management/resources/introduction-telemedicine
2. For clinicians that are required to have direct contact with patients, a screening test for Covid-19 is recommended before initial commencement of service. This is critical if you have any risk factor of being infected by Covid-19 in the 14 days prior to your planned first contact with patients. The test results should be obtained before your first contact with patient. This screening test needs to be repeated if any suspected exposure occurs while you are providing service and all patient contact must be ceased till the new results become available.
1. All patients should be required to fill up a questionnaire to rule out risk factors of being infected with Covid-19. Guideline for screening and triaging patients can be referred from http://moh.gov.my/moh/resources/Penerbitan/Garis%20Panduan/COVID19/Annex_2c_Screening_Triaging_22032020.pdf

2. For cases where direct contact is necessary, a distance of minimum of 1.5 meter is recommended to be observed. 3 ply surgical masks are recommended to be worn at all times during the session and proper hand hygiene to be observed at all times. Masks are recommended to be changed after each patient and immediately if becomes wet or soiled.
3. For procedure that require contact closer than 1.5 meter, this contact should be kept as short as possible. Consideration of wearing other PPE such as face shield, gloves or gowns need to be considered for individual cases, taking into account risk of exposure to aerosol or droplets.
4. Clinic or workspace needs to be disinfected regularly and after each patient contact as per guidelines from the Ministry of Health.
http://moh.gov.my/moh/resources/Penerbitan/Garis%20Panduan/COVID19/Annex_8_IPC_21032_020.pdf
5. Update yourself on the procedures required if you are exposed to Covid-19 as a healthcare worker in Malaysia.
http://moh.gov.my/moh/resources/Penerbitan/Garis%20Panduan/COVID19/Annex_21_Protocol_for_Health_Care_Workers_08042020.pdf

As healthcare professionals, Audiologists and Speech-Language Therapists are essential in providing care and service to our patient population. However, it is imperative that this provision of service must not bring harm to the patient. Please take into account the risks of infection by Covid-19 and take the most appropriate course of action as a professional for your particular setting and environment.

References:-

1. Ministry of Health Malaysia (www.moh.gov.my)
2. Royal College of Speech Language Therapists (<https://www.rcslt.org/>)
3. British Society of Audiology (<https://www.thebsa.org.uk/>)
4. American Academy of Audiology (<https://www.audiology.org/>)
5. Speech Pathology Australia (<https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/>)