



"HEARING CHALLENGES IN A NOISY WORLD"

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SPEECH LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE

SPEAKERS' PROFILES AND ABSTRACTS

DR. ANTHONY J. FENECH

Dr. Fenech graduated MD in 1986, MSc in audiological medicine from University of London in 1992 and PhD in ENT in 2007. He has been working in the department of Otolaryngology since 1989 with special interest in hearing loss in both paediatric and adults. Currently he is a consultant in audiovestibular medicine at Mater Dei Hospital running daily clinics in both adult and paediatric audiology and vestibology. Dr. Fenech attended various courses and seminars and presented papers in conferences both locally and abroad over the years all related to audiology. He also lectures at the University of Malta and medical school on topics of anatomy and audiology / ENT.

Adults and deafness

This talk will address the management of adults and geriatric cases with hearing loss. Both medical and surgical aspects will be tackled.

MR. KARL LANGTON

Mr Karl Langton from Conversor is an audiologist by profession and has been involved in the market for Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) for more the past 11 years. Karl has researched and analysed extensively the hearing aid and ALD market. He has travelled extensively, advising ENT Specialists and audiologists on the proper applications of ALDs. He is also involved in the Audiological Equipment side of the industry.

Assistive Listening Devices

Generically, this term identifies all equipment used to provide hearing ability for people in a variety of situations but more specifically they aid people who are hard of hearing. The ALD may be used to help people hear televisions and other audio devices and also to help people hear speech through PA systems such as in church or at a lecture. The assistive listening device is usually used as a system where the audio source is broadcast wirelessly over an FM frequency. The person who is listening may use a small FM Receiver to tune into the signal and listen at their preferred volume. This presentation will take a look at a number of instruments available and the advantages of each instrument in particular situations in the light of re-education and speech development.

MS. VIKTORJA MCDONELL

Ms Viktorja McDonell from COCHLEAR holds a Masters in Special Education and is also a qualified teacher of deaf children. Viktorija is also the mother of a girl who in 1987 became one of the first children to receive a cochlear implant. Holly became totally deaf as a result of meningitis at the age of four. Viktorija worked with Holly at home as part of her rehabilitation process and used this experience both in her later studies and in her work with Cochlear as Coordinator of Habilitation.

Integrated Scales of Development (ISD)

The Integrated Scales of Development (ISD) provides a framework in which both planning and evaluation of progress can be done effectively. It is based on the natural developmental milestones of normal hearing children and covers six overlapping areas: audition, receptive language, expressive language, speech, cognition and communication. The ISD is a key part of Listen Learn and Talk (Cochlear 2005). In an effective auditory habilitation program, the auditory therapist and the parent would be working together to facilitate the progress of the child. The ISD can be seen as the 'map' and the therapist as the 'navigator' in guiding the parent who is the main language model, or 'driver', for the child. The 'destination' or long term goal is that the hearing impaired child with a cochlear implant can attain age appropriate language and spoken communication skills. The ISD is an effective way to plan and evaluate progress for short, medium and long term goals.

MS. SONIA AZZOPARDI AXIAK

Sonia Azzopardi Axiak graduated with a B.Sc.(Hons.) in Communication Therapy in 1997 from the University of Malta. In 1995, Sonia graduated with an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Malta. The dissertation presented was A study of the communication skills of a small group of deaf children, under the supervision of Dr Marie Alexander. In 2010, Sonia successfully completed a course in Maltese proofreading within the University of Malta. Sonia is currently a senior Speech-Language Pathologist within the Speech Language Department.

A Study of the communication skills of a small group of deaf children

This study explores the communication skills of three 10- to 12-year old students with a profound hearing loss, using different communication modalities (speech, signing and writing). It also examines the extent to which different modalities may be used effectively to achieve a well-formed narrative. A case study approach was chosen. Students performed three screening activities and two narratives in their preferred communication modality. Overall, students used a variety of communication skills effectively, irrespective of which communication modality was used and well-formed narratives were achieved. The students were also observed to use language creatively. The suitability of narratives as a clinical tool will also be discussed.

MS. JACKIE BUSUTTIL

Jackie Busuttill graduated as a Speech-Language Pathologist in 1997 and has been working with Cochlear implanted children since 1998. Her first client walked into the clinic 13 years ago, with a very enthusiastic mother who had decided that Jackie would go to Manchester with the family to learn all about it. Ms.Busuttill has not looked back since. Working with these children over the years has been so rewarding and has just fuelled a passion for the subject.

Children with Cochlear implants - a year on

Children with cochlear implant are increasing in numbers and will continue to do so especially now that we have a local cochlear implant programme. More of these children will also be referred to the community clinics. In order to give a better understanding of the area, a brief overview of the process will be given. The presentation will give a picture of the local situation locally and provide useful information regarding principles of auditory training and their aim with CI/HA users and therapy goals for the children after their first year of implant use.

DR. NADINE CALLEJA

Dr Nadine Calleja is an assistant lecturer in the Department of Communication Therapy at the Faculty of Health Sciences. She is a practising Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologist and has a special interest in hearing impairment and auditory processing. Dr. Calleja holds a Master of Science degree in Audiological Science from UCL and a Doctor of Audiology degree from Nova Southeastern University. She is currently reading for a Ph.D. on auditory processing in children where she is in the process of standardizing a test battery in auditory processing on Maltese children aged between 7 and 9 years.

Auditory processing disorders: beyond the audiogram

Disorders of (Central) auditory processing ((C)APD) have been defined as a difficulty in processing auditory information, irrespective of hearing thresholds being within normal limits (ASHA, 2005a). This disorder can result in complaints such as the inability to understand verbal language in noisy situations, difficulty following long conversations or remembering spoken information, getting easily distracted in the presence of other sounds in the environment, and difficulty directing, sustaining, or dividing attention (Schminky & Baran, 2000). The aim of this talk is to help clinicians familiarise themselves with the difficulties encountered by children with auditory processing disorder and to provide methods and techniques of helping these children overcome their difficulties.

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