

## REPORT ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF AUDIOLOGY (APTA-PORTUGAL)

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Audiology (APtA-Portugal), organized by the Portuguese Association of Audiologists, was held in Aveiro, Portugal, on 13–14 October 2017.

This year's meeting gathered more than 140 participants from all Portuguese regions. Key speakers came from Belgium, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The meeting consisted of four panels and two workshops over two days.

On the first day the meeting began with Panel I, "Profession". An introduction on the historical background of audiology and audiologists in Portugal was given, followed by a talk from Prof. Dr. Mark Laureyns from the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA) who spoke on state-of-the-art professional skills and compared practice in Belgium and Portugal. He discussed the regulation of audiologists in Portugal and the creation of a professional regulatory body. He also spoke about the economic impact of hearing problems, compared the Portuguese situation with other European countries, and outlined the importance of prevention and early rehabilitation. The importance of audiology to the community was highlighted, and he suggested steps that might promote audiology – for example, primary audiological healthcare that would avoid unnecessary visits to hospital and increase equality of access.

Panel II addressed vestibular rehabilitation, in which new techniques in vestibular diagnosis – cVEMP, oVEMP, and vHIT – were presented. The panel emphasised their importance in obtaining more reliable diagnoses, particularly if uniform protocols are used so that strategies and results can be compared. Prof. Dr. Jean-Philippe Guyot gave a technical presentation on vestibular implants, their applications, and some preliminary clinical results.

On the second day, presentations covered auditory rehabilitation, particularly in pediatrics and geriatrics. In terms of pediatrics, the first communication discussed genetic weaknesses in hearing development and the value of a thorough assessment of family risk factors, allowing early

rehabilitation if needed. The next presentation concerned the clinical value of hearing instruments, programming methods, and recent developments that can help audiologists fit them correctly in children. This was followed by a similar talk by another speaker on cochlear implants which focused on recent and forthcoming developments. The last pediatric presentation was on auditory training and its importance for rehabilitating young children, particularly those who have Central Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD).

Regarding geriatrics, presentations focused on the need to create awareness among the general population about hearing loss. Reviews were given of epidemiology, how elderly people are growing in number and the associated problems, and the need to promote physical and psychological well-being. The next speaker spoke about hearing and cognition, stressing the importance of hearing conservation and rehabilitation to avoid cognitive deficits associated with hearing loss. The last communication focused on geriatric aspects of hearing rehabilitation: the problems that audiologists can face when dealing with geriatric hearing loss and the most suitable solutions.

Two workshops on neuropsychology screening were held: "The importance of neuropsychological assessment: screening instruments (Dr<sup>a</sup>. Filipa Ferreira) and "Auditory training and central auditory processing" (Dr<sup>a</sup>. Cristina Murphy). These subjects are important in audiology clinical practice in Portugal, and the room was filled to capacity.

In the closing ceremony two awards were announced. The best poster was "The fully implantable Cochlear Carina System: first clinical results" by Susana Oliveira and colleagues, and the best oral presentation was "The importance of a platform to monitor universal newborn hearing screening" by Ana Lopes and colleagues.

The APTA normally organizes an international congress in Portugal every two years. Since EFAS 2019 will be held in Lisbon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> APTA will take place in 2021.