

NHS 2012: BEYOND NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING. INFANT AND CHILDHOOD HEARING IN SCIENCE AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

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Newborn Hearing Screening (NHS) conference takes place once every two years in Cernobbio, Lake Como, Italy. This year the conference was held on June 5th–7th. Specialists in audiology, otolaryngology, hearing sciences, communication disorders, neurosciences, neurology, psychology, genetics, biology, engineering, health care, epidemiology and other related areas from all over the world presented their work and exchange ideas during this international event. According to data provided by the organizers over 550 participants from 60 countries came together to attend the meeting. The Conference included Keynote Addresses, Special Session, oral communications with more than 140 platform presentations and Poster Sessions with 145 posters. Some of the topics being discussed in the field of NHS included models of early intervention, training and support, the importance of quality assurance, applications of telehealth, genetics of hearing loss, unilateral and mild hearing loss – risk factors and language development, new diagnostic techniques, evidence based NHS and data management.

Ann Geers, from USA, in her keynote lecture presented the results of two big studies of 60 children implanted at 1–2 years of age from 2001 to 2010 and 112 children who received a cochlear implant (CI) between 2 and 5 yrs of age implanted from 1996 to 2008 to answer the question: Can we expect children who receive a cochlear implant as infants to catch up with their normal hearing peers by elementary grades and to remain caught up when they graduate high school? The overall conclusions from the study were that CI at young age (to 24 months) was associated with most intelligible speech and age-related spoken language; all children with CI continued to show improved speech perception, speech production, language and reading skills through



their school years, improved phonological processing was associated with faster language development, social skills were age appropriate at both primary grades and high school.

Special Sessions on International Report on EHDI Programs was organized by the International Working Group on Childhood Hearing and the CDC/National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (EHDI Team). The session included the reports from Russia, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Cyprus, Palestine, Iran, Brazil, Singapore, Indonesia, New Zealand. Group from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing in Poland presented European Consensus Statement on Hearing Screening of Pre-School and School-Age Children within EHDI Policies Session.

Considerable debate exists over the most effective method for detecting hearing loss post UNHS. Traditionally, targeted surveillance of at-risk infants using a risk factor registry, has been considered "best practice" to monitor hearing throughout early childhood. However, criticisms of these recommendations have been reported during the meeting and the limitations of the targeted surveillance program question the usefulness of this service delivery model. Preschool and school screening programs have been mentioned as one of the method recommended for early detection of delayed-onset hearing loss.

In Cernobbio Poland was represented by the group from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing in Warsaw and Institute of Acoustic in Poznan. We reported on European Consensus Statement, mentioned above, the benefit of bilateral implantation in pre-school children

and development and application of the Pediatric Matrix Sentence Test. Prof. W. Sulkowski, who is European Federation of Audiology Societies' (EFAS) Auditor and its Polish member participated in EFAS General Assembly (GA), which accompanied the Newborn Hearing Screening (NHS) conference. On the agenda of the EFAS GA, among other issues, was the report from the EFAS Working Group on School Hearing Screening. The establishment of the Working Group was the next step after the European Consensus Statement endorsement and the adoption of the "EU Council Conclusions on early detection and treatment of communication disorders in children, including

the use of e-health tools and innovative solutions" (2011/C 361/04), at the end of Polish Presidency of the EU Council (December 2, 2011). Poland is represented in the EFAS Working Group by Prof. Henryk Skarżyński, state consultant in otorhinolaryngology and director of the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing.

The magic of Lake Como and its surroundings made these days truly an unforgettable experience. The meeting in 2014 will bring together hearing screening in newborns and adults (NHS and AHS) as HEaring Across the Lifespan (HEAL 2014).