



International Collegium of Rehabilitative Audiology

Rehabilitation for Older Adults Working Group

Report on project: Assessing Longitudinal Change in Rehabilitation Needs of Older People with Hearing Impairment

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Background to the Project: At the 2003 ICRA meeting in Denmark, Kathy Pichora-Fuller presented the outcomes of the 2001 Eriksholm Workshop (*Candidature and delivery of audiological services: Special needs of older people*). The outcomes of this workshop have since appeared in the International Journal of Audiology, volume 42 Suppl 2, 2003. A number of ICRA members were also attendees at the Eriksholm workshop. A discussion followed the presentation and the working group decided to take up one of the research needs identified in the workshop as its major objective for the next 2 year period (to be reported on at the 2005 ICRA meeting in Florida).

The objective of the project: To investigate the longitudinal change in rehabilitation needs of older people ie how do goals change over time? Specifically the group planned to evaluate changes in goals subsequent to initial rehabilitation such as hearing aid fitting and/or participating in other forms of rehabilitation (e.g., group communication programs, individual communication training).

The project: A research plan was developed and circulated to all members who provided feedback and indicated whether or not they would be able to participate in data collection. The agreed process of data collection is shown on the following page.

Session 1.

1. Tell me about the problems that you have with your hearing in everyday life – any particular circumstances, any particular people?

e.g., can't hear when my wife speaks to me from 3 rooms away

2. Ask the client to consider each of the problems and discuss with them whether or not they would like these problems to be goals for rehabilitation.

e.g., would you like to hear what your wife is saying?

3. Then, look at goals and prioritise – so which of these is most important for you at the moment?

e.g., is hearing your wife better the most important thing for you at the moment?

Session 2 (optional).

If the client returns shortly after rehabilitation (2 to 4 weeks post-fitting) for a follow-up appointment, ask the client to rate outcomes using the COSI ratings for degree of change.

Session 3.

5. Contact the person 3 to 6 months after rehabilitation – don't tell them at first what their original goals were. Tell me about the problems that you have with your hearing in everyday life NOW...go through the same process in step 2 as above.

6. After that, say these were the original goals that you had – are any of them still a problem for you? If so, include them. Also rate outcome again in relation to original goal using the COSI goals.

7. Repeat step 3 above, prioritizing **all** goals.

Details were also collected about participants' demographic information, audiological information as well as goals over time.

Outcomes of the project: Data collection was undertaken by Louise Hickson (Australia), Sophia Kramer (The Netherlands) and Dafydd Stephens (Wales) and findings presented at the 2005 ICRA meeting in Florida.

The main finding was that the nature of goals changed over time subsequent to initial rehabilitation. Thus it is essential that clinicians reassess the goals that clients want to work on and not assume that if original goals are met, then that is all that the older person with hearing impairment requires. Additional rehabilitation may be necessary to address the changing needs of older clients and ensure longterm satisfaction with rehabilitation.