

References

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WHO Report

WWHearing

World-Wide Hearing Care for Developing Countries

Key stakeholders concerned with provision of appropriate and affordable hearing aids and services in developing countries came together recently at a workshop at WHO, Geneva, and agreed to establish a new initiative, *WWHearing – World-Wide Hearing Care For Developing Countries*. Participants came from 18 developing and developed countries and represented governments, NGOs, manufacturers (commercial and not-for-profit), organizations of users and professionals, donors, and relevant experts.

The mission of *WWHearing* will be to promote better hearing through the provision of hearing aids and services in developing countries and underserved

communities within the framework of the *WHO Guidelines for Hearing Aids and Services for Developing Countries*.

WHO estimates there are currently 250 million people world-wide with moderate or worse hearing loss, most of whom could benefit from hearing aids. Two thirds are in developing countries. Current annual production of hearing aids is less than 10% of global needs and approximately 30 million are needed annually in developing countries, together with services and staff to fit them.

At the guidelines launch in 2001, WHO called on the private sector to provide affordable hearing aids in the develop-

ing world and emphasized that prices of hearing aids will remain prohibitive until all stakeholders work together to reduce costs.

The new executive committee of *WWHearing* has drafted the latter's Terms of Reference and operating procedures and has produced guidelines for pilot projects for public-private partnerships in particular developing countries. These will be presented for approval and action at the first meeting of *WWHearing* later this year.

Andrew W Smith
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INTERNET RESOURCES

A Basic Syllabus on Ear Nose and Throat Diseases was developed by the **Baylor College of Medicine Department of Otolaryngology and Communicative Sciences Faculty, Houston, Texas**, as a guide to otolaryngology for medical students. The syllabus can also be used as a training resource for nurses and other Primary Health Care workers and includes chapters on the anatomy of the ear, hearing tests, common diseases of the external, middle and inner ear, hearing and speech disorders. Some of the learning objectives, related to **Primary Ear and Hearing Care**, are:

- Students should be able to perform a basic head and neck examination with equipment available to a primary care practitioner (flashlight/torch, tongue blade, otoscope).
- Students should be familiar with typical clinical presentation, key physical findings, initial treatment, and referral indications for common otolaryngological diseases such as: external otitis, acute otitis media, serous otitis media, ruptured eardrum, cerumen impaction, presbycusis, tinnitus and vertigo.

The **Core Curriculum Syllabus** can be downloaded from: <http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/oto/studs/>

Emedicine Otolaryngology. More advanced, excellent monographs on otology and audiology can be found on: <http://www.emedicine.com/ent/>

Dr Quinn's Textbook of Otolaryngology is at: <http://otohns.net/library/grandrounds.asp> or <http://www.utmb.edu/otoref/Grnds/GrndsIndex.html>

The Report of the International Workshop on Primary Ear and Hearing Care, Cape Town, 12-14 March 1998: http://who.int/pbd/pdh/Docs/Capetown_final_report.pdf

Bobby R Alford's Grand Rounds: <http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/oto/grand/otology.html>

A useful resource on **Evidence-based Medicine:** http://researchinpem.homestead.com/evidencebasedpem_otitis.html

Cochrane Review on Ear Wax Drops: <http://www.update-software.com/abstracts/ab004326.htm>