

The Better Hearing Rehabilitation (BEAR) study in Denmark. Population characteristics of the hearing aid user and benefits of hearing aid treatment in the current program of hearing rehabilitation.

Anne Wolff¹, Jesper Hvass Schmidt^{3,4,5}, Sabina Storbjerg Houmøller^{3,4,5}, Dan Dupont Hougaard^{1,2}, Michael Gaihede^{1,2}, Christian Godballe^{3,4}, Dorte Hammershøi⁶.

1. Department of Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery and Audiology, Aalborg University hospital, Aalborg, Denmark
2. Department of Clinical Research, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark
3. Department of ORL - Head & Neck Surgery and Audiology Odense University Hospital, Odense, Denmark
4. Department of Clinical Research, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark
5. OPEN, Odense Patient data Explorative Network, Odense University Hospital, Odense, Denmark
6. Department of Electronic Systems, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark

Introduction.

The Better Hearing Rehabilitation Study aims to improve the hearing rehabilitation in Denmark with improvement of all aspects in the clinical evaluation process and with the hearing aid fitting in order to increase patient satisfaction and better hearing rehabilitation. Currently not much is known about the actual outcomes of the hearing aid treatment. Patients may choose not to wear the hearing aids if the benefit is limited. Current clinical practice uses a trial and error strategy in order to optimize the treatment. The first part of the BEAR project therefore aims to investigate the actual patient reported outcomes in relation to the hearing aid treatment.

Methods.

Approximately 2000 patients are included in the study. The patients are referred to a clinical examination for hearing loss. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ are new first-time hearing aid users and $\frac{1}{4}$ are patients with previous hearing aid experience. Prior to the initial audiometry patients respond to The Speech, Spatial and Qualities of Hearing scale (SSQ) questionnaire and the quality of life questionnaire (15-D). In case of patient reported tinnitus, patients answer the Tinnitus Handicap Inventory (THI) and in case of previous hearing aid experience, the International Outcome Inventory for Hearing Aids (IOI-HA) is answered.

At least two months after the hearing aid fitting, the patients answer the identical questionnaires again. Patient reported outcomes are related to the audiometric data, the use of the hearing aid provided from hearing aid log-data and Real Ear Measurement (REM) data.

Results.

Preliminary results indicate that patients use hearing aids approximately 9 hours each day on average. A large difference among patients exists. Some patients use their hearing aids less than one hour. Approximately half of the patients experience tinnitus. Data reporting change in patient reported outcomes such as SSQ, THI, and IOI-HA will be presented.

Discussion.

It is clearly that some patients do not benefit sufficiently from their hearing aids. This study is important to understand some of the factors, which are important for successful hearing aid treatment.