

Hearing aid use in children with mild bilateral hearing loss

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The use of amplification has been explored as a factor in increasing the development of speech and language skills in children with hearing loss. There is a positive association between language ability and hours of hearing aid use, with increased use leading to increased language abilities (Tomblin et al., 2015). The evidence for this association is clear in children with moderate and greater hearing loss; however, there is limited research of this association in children with mild bilateral hearing loss (Walker et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2020, McPherson et al., 2021). Current research focuses on young and school-aged children and included datalogging as a measure of hearing aid use as well as parental perception of hearing aid use.

This study examined the hearing aid use in older school-aged children with mild bilateral hearing loss. More specifically, it investigated children's and parents' estimation of use in comparison to datalogging as well as explored the situations children used their hearing aids. Participants included sixteen children with mild bilateral hearing loss and their parents. Of those, 14 children used hearing aids. Children and parents completed a questionnaire on hours of hearing aid use and situations hearing aids were used. Datalogging of the hearing aids was recorded and compared to the outcome of the questionnaires. Datalogging indicated average hearing aid use time was 6.6 hours. Children significantly overestimated their use of their hearing aids while approximately half the parents overestimated their child's use. Children used their hearing aids most often at school and in the car.

Children with mild bilateral hearing loss overestimate the amount of time they are wearing their hearing aids. This may impact counselling and intervention on the use of hearing aids. Therefore, school-aged children should be included in the discussions around potentially increasing use of hearing aids.

References

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