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## **Ear health, dichotic listening and phonological awareness skills in children from Northern Territory**

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The main objective of this presentation is to examine the relationship between dichotic listening and phonological awareness in children with otitis media (OM) from Northern Territory (NT). Otitis media or fluid in ear is regarded as one of the global burdens that seem to be highly prevalent in certain communities. OM causes fluctuating hearing loss and is particularly prevalent in First Nations communities in Australia and around the world. For instance, in one study, over half of 101 Indigenous children were noted to have otitis media (Sharma et al 2020). Despite many publications on the said theme, the impact of the otitis media on reading continues to be of prime concern (Timms et al., 2014). Previous research has shown dichotic listening to be a strong predictor of phonological awareness in Indigenous children from rural and remote parts of NT (Sharma et al., 2020). In this talk, the association between phonological awareness and dichotic listening will be explored in children from more urban parts of NT, and what differences there may be between the remote and urban Indigenous children and their skills.

### **Biography**

Dr Mridula Sharma is a Professor of Audiology at Macquarie University. She has broad interests in hearing and neuroscience including speech perception, listening disorders, evoked potentials and auditory plasticity in children and adults. Dr Sharma has investigated the effects of cognition such as attention and memory on listening. Her current projects include investigating the association between auditory processing and reading skills in children; speech perception in noise and the role of language and attention. Her international collaborations include University of Auckland and Capital Medical University China.