

WHO Programme for Prevention of Deafness and Hearing Loss

Activity Report 2017

Blindness and Deafness Prevention, Disability and Rehabilitation (BDD)

Department for Management of NCDs, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention (NVI)

World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland



**World Health
Organization**

WHO Vision:

A world in which no person experiences hearing loss due to preventable causes... and those with unavoidable hearing loss can achieve their full potential through appropriate interventions, education and empowerment.

WHO programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss (PDH): Activity Report 2017

Despite the magnitude of impact of hearing loss across the world, ear and hearing care services remain out of reach for many who need them. The relevance of these issues and their required actions were highlighted by the World Health Assembly through its resolutions WHA48.9 of 1995 and more recently WHA70.13 of 2017. These documents have called upon Member States and partners to integrate strategies for ear and hearing care within the framework of their healthcare systems, and implement actions to ensure that ear and hearing care is accessible universally to those who need it.

http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA70/A70_R13-en.pdf

In the context of these resolutions, WHO objectives are to:

- Gather and collate data to drive action for hearing loss
- Undertake effective evidence-based advocacy for prioritization of ear and hearing care
- Support strategy development and implementation in WHO Member States
- Develop and promote the ‘Make Listening Safe’ initiative

Programme activities in 2017

2017 was a historic year for the field of global ear and hearing care, with the unanimous adoption of a resolution on prevention of deafness and hearing loss by the 70th World Health Assembly on 30 May 2017. The resolution calls upon the member states to ensure access to ear and hearing care for all people and requests WHO to undertake a series of activities in this respect (WHA70.13).

Based on the resolution, WHO’s programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss has undertaken the following activities through the year:



70th World Health Assembly 2017

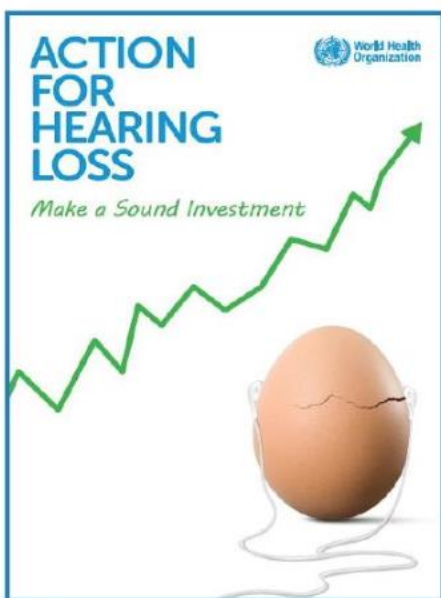
Evidence-based advocacy

World Hearing Day 2017

3 March is World Hearing Day, an annual global advocacy event to raise awareness regarding deafness and hearing loss. The event serves to promote ear and hearing care at national and community levels across the world.

World Hearing Day 2017 drew attention to the issue of the growing economic impact of unaddressed hearing loss through the theme: *“Action for hearing loss: make a sound investment.”* WHO estimates that the lack of awareness and intervention in global hearing loss issues poses an overall annual cost of 750 billion international dollars worldwide and has a significant impact on the lives of those affected. We used World Hearing Day to promote cost-effective interventions which can mitigate hearing loss and its consequences. It highlighted the need for actions which can be undertaken by decision-makers to address hearing loss at country level.

Information materials on this theme were generated including posters, banners and an infographic. These were translated into the UN languages and were widely utilized by our Member States and partners during World Hearing Day activities around the world to create a truly global and united campaign. Press briefing and media outreach was undertaken by WHO. Activities were organized in 56 countries and by partners across the world. A detailed report can be accessed at: <http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/2017/en/>



←2017 World Hearing Day poster



→World Hearing Day 2017 Instagram posts

International and regional advocacy events

AudiologyNow! American Academy of Audiology meeting in April 2017, Indianapolis, USA:

A keynote address on 'Global action for hearing care' was presented at the conference which was attended by over 5000 delegates from USA and other countries.

CDC Public Health Grand Round on 'It's loud out there' in June 2017, Atlanta, USA:

This event promoted hearing health across one's lifespan.

<https://www.cdc.gov/cdcgrandrounds/archives/2017/june2017.html>

13th Congress of the European Federation of Audiological Societies, June 2017, Interlaken, Switzerland:

A keynote address on 'The economic impact of hearing loss and global action for hearing care' was presented at the 13th Congress of EFAS in Interlaken, Switzerland.

World ENT Congress organized by the International Federation of Otorhinolaryngological Societies (IFOS) in Paris, June 2017:

- A. Keynote address on 'Promoting ear and hearing care' was presented.
- B. A WHO round table on 'Promoting ear and hearing care: Experiences from across the world' was organized and co-chaired along with Dr James E Saunders of the Coalition for Global Hearing Health (CGHH).
- C. A booth was set up by WHO-PDH and CGHH at the conference exhibition area. The booth was provided by the IFOS and showcased the activities and materials prepared by WHO.

Conference of the Pan-African Federation of Otolaryngological Societies (PAFOS), Abuja, Nigeria, November 2017:

A keynote address 'Global action for hearing: WHO's approach' and a talk on 'WHO tools for promoting ear and hearing care at country level'.



Booth showcasing activities and materials of WHO and CGHH

Support strategy development and implementation in WHO Member States

Technical documents

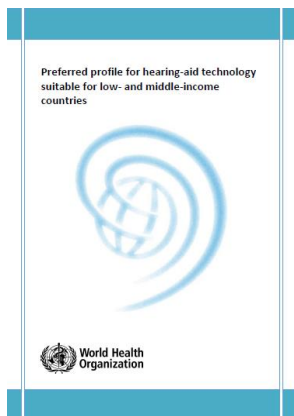
The following documents are part of the toolkit of technical support for Member States. The documents under development or launched in 2017 include:

‘Preferred profile of hearing aid technology suitable for lower- and middle-income countries’ which summarizes information on the features of hearing-aid technologies that offer the greatest benefit to those with hearing loss and deafness in low-resource settings, published in English online. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/258721/1/9789241512961-eng.pdf>

Handbook on advocacy for ear and hearing care which was developed through a consultative meeting held in WHO in July 2017. The handbook is being developed in collaboration with experts in the field of health communication at the University of Lucerne, Switzerland and is expected to be published in 2018.

‘EHC: strategies and current practices’ and ‘EHC: indicators:’ Development of these two documents was initiated in 2016 and continued in 2017 with inputs from experts across the world. These are expected to be launched in 2018.

Revision of the primary ear and hearing care training resources which are being advanced with support of experts from around the world. The revision process is likely to continue through 2018 followed by field testing in identified locations. The revised training resources are expected to be launched in 2019. http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/activities/hearing_care/en/



← PP for hearing aid technology in LMICs

→ Ear and hearing care manual



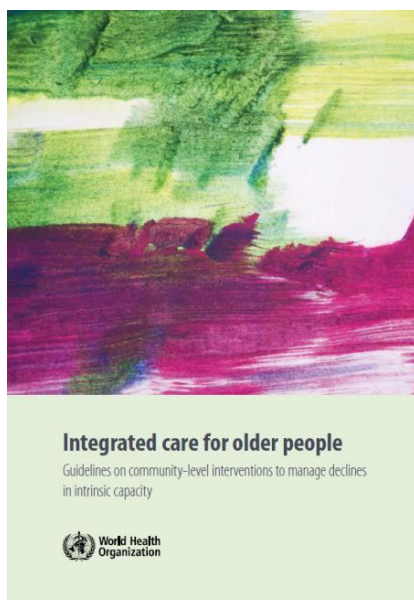
Technical inputs for integration of ear and hearing care were provided for following WHO documents

“WHO Toolkit for management of people affected by complications associated with the Zika virus.” This toolkit has been developed as a model guide for public health planners, healthcare professionals and community workers to deliver comprehensive care and support for those affected by Zika virus. http://www.who.int/mental_health/neurology/zika_toolkit/en/

Guidelines for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis and companion handbook on audiological monitoring to help health providers use audiometry to make informed decisions and patient-centred decisions to prevent and manage ototoxicity resulting from second-line anti-TB injectables. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/250125/1/9789241549639-eng.pdf>
https://www.challengentb.org/publications/tools/pmdt/Audiometry_in_the%20Management_of_Drug_Resistant_TB.pdf

“WHO Guidelines on Integrated Care of Older Persons (ICOPE)” was launched by WHO’s department on ageing and the life-course. It includes evidence-based recommendations to prevent, slow or reverse the decline associated with ageing. It also includes recommendations on ear and hearing care. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/258981/1/9789241550109-eng.pdf?ua=1>

Technical input for ‘ICOpe: the path to universal health coverage,’ which was a global consultation held in October 2017 in Berlin.



←WHO guidelines on integrated care of older persons (ICOPE)

→WHO Toolkit for the care and support of people affected by complications associated with Zika virus



Member States support through consultations

Japan:

A symposium on hearing loss and related cognitive decline was organized by the Government in Tokyo in January 2017. This was followed by a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Health along with professional groups and industry partners to define the future course of action.

Tajikistan:

Development of a training programme for family doctors and nurses on hearing care and vision, in collaboration with WCO and Ministry of Health.

- a. A country visit was undertaken in December 2017. Meetings held with all the relevant stakeholders and assessment of the existing situation was made.
- b. The next steps were identified and a training outline has been developed. Training and capacity building for ear and hearing care are to be initiated in April 2018.

Member States in Region of the Americas:

3rd meeting of the eye and ear care managers at the Ministries of Health in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Bogota, Colombia in May 2017.

- a. Member States were sensitized to the WHO programme for the prevention of deafness and hearing loss.
- b. WHO tools and materials were shared with MS.
- c. Next steps for developing hearing care services in the participating countries were agreed.



3rd meeting of the eye and ear care managers at the Ministries of Health in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

China:

A country visit was undertaken in November 2017 for:

- a. Development of a pilot project on the integration of primary ear and hearing care with health services for older adults. The model is being developed in collaboration with the WHO collaborating centre at the Nanjing Medical University and will initially be piloted in 3 locations within the Jiangsu province.
- b. Participation in the National Consultation on deafness prevention and treatment which was held in Beijing, China in November 2017. The WHA resolution (WHA 70.13) was presented at this meeting. Technical inputs for development of hearing care were provided, as requested.

Nigeria:

An initial meeting was held with the Minister of Health, other ministry officials and professional groups within Nigeria, in consultation with the WCO, Nigeria, for development of ear and hearing care services in the country.

Other Member States supported through technical inputs and online review of materials:

Philippines: Department of Health in the Philippines and WHO country office undertook a situation analysis based on WHO's Ear and Hearing Care Situation Analysis Tool (EHCSAT). Planning was initiated with use of WHO handbook for planning of national EHC strategies. Three models will be developed as demonstration sites by the Department of Health in coming months.

Zambia: Launched its national strategy for provision of ENT services in 2017. The strategic plan was developed in collaboration with MoH, CBM, WHO and other stakeholders.

Kenya: Following the launch of a national strategic plan for provision of ear and hearing care services in 2016, implementation protocols have been developed in 2017 to ensure consistent service provision, focusing on early identification of hearing loss and ear diseases.



← Cochlear implantee at the Suqian hospital in China

→ WHO materials on display at a primary health centre in Nanjing, China



Data to drive action for hearing loss

The **WHO ear and hearing prevalence handbook** is expected to be completed and ready for publication by mid-2018. The preparation of the handbook was advanced during 2017 through:

- a. An expert group meeting held in London, UK in April 2017.
- b. Development and review of draft versions of the survey handbook.
- c. A field testing study which was completed in India and planned for Kenya.
- d. Development of Rapid assessment of hearing loss protocol, in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- e. A validation study for alternative hearing assessment technologies which was completed in India and New Zealand.
- f. Software development for data entry and analysis (to support the handbook). This is being developed by WWHearing, in collaboration with WHO.

The report on the **“Global costs of unaddressed hearing loss and cost-effectiveness of interventions”** was released in March 2017. The analysis was undertaken by Dr McDaid at the London School of Economics. It estimated the costs posed by unaddressed hearing loss to the health-care system and to the economy as a whole.

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/254659/1/9789241512046-eng.pdf>

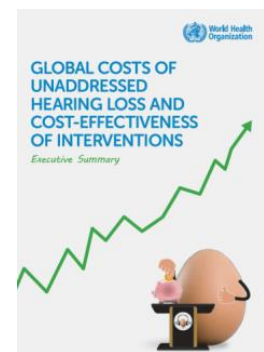
Global hearing loss projections for the future are being developed through compilation and review of literature; data extraction and analysis which was undertaken in 2017. The data is expected to be released as a report in March 2018.



↑Talk on economic impact of hearing loss at EFAS



↑Expert group for development of survey handbook



↑Global costs of unaddressed hearing loss report

Develop and promote the Make Listening Safe initiative

<http://www.who.int/deafness/make-listening-safe/en/>

The **Make Listening Safe (MLS) initiative** was launched in 2015, with the objective of reducing the risk of hearing loss posed by unsafe listening. As well as development and implementation of global standards for safe listening devices the MLS initiative is undertaking a public health campaign for safe listening. In coming years, it is planned to develop a regulatory framework for the control of recreational sound exposure. The following activities were undertaken in this respect in 2017:

- a. WHO-ITU consultation was organized in March 2017: A consultation on this initiative was organized in collaboration with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) at the WHO headquarters with the objectives to review progress in different areas of work as part of this initiative and to determine the next steps.
- b. Development of standards for personal audio devices: this is being undertaken in collaboration with ITU. The draft standards have been outlined with inputs from relevant stakeholders. Drafting meetings were held at ITU offices in May 2017 and September 2017. The standards are expected to be finalized in 2018.
- c. Development of a policy brief on health communications and messages was completed as part of the standards for safe listening devices, in consultation with experts in health communication at the University of Luzern.
- d. Development of awareness materials for safe listening: in order to promote awareness among the target groups, social media materials including two brief videos were developed on the subject.

<http://www.who.int/deafness/make-listening-safe/advocacy-materials/en/>



← WHO-ITU
consultation,
WHO HQ

- e. Development of a safe listening application: an educational app on safe listening is being prepared by WHO.
- f. Development of a webpage on Make Listening Safe and a set a 'FAQs' on safe listening. <http://www.who.int/deafness/make-listening-safe/FAQs/en/>
- g. Background materials and reviews have been prepared to gather evidence that can support the standards and communication products. These background monographs are available on the MLS webpage http://www.who.int/deafness/make-listening-safe/mls_consultation/en/

The image is a composite of three parts. On the left is a poster for 'Make Listening Safe' featuring a cracked egg with headphones and the text 'Make Listening Safe'. In the center is a WHO factsheet titled 'KEY FACTS' with statistics: '1.1 billion young people worldwide are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices', 'Over 43 million people 12-35 years live with disabling hearing loss', and 'Among young people 12-35 years in middle- and high-income countries: Nearly 50% listen to unsafe levels of sound through personal audio devices (MP3 players, smartphones, and others) and Around 40% are exposed to potentially damaging levels of sound at nightclubs, bars and sporting events'. On the right is a smartphone displaying the 'Make Listening Safe' app interface, showing 'Today's sound dose 75.3%' and a music player for 'Being for the the Be... The Beatles'.

↑ Make listening safe poster, factsheet and app

Partnerships to promote global action on hearing loss

The 1st meeting of the East and Central African EHC Regional Forum was held in Harare, Zimbabwe in March 2017 under the leadership of Dr Clemence Chidziva with participation of eight countries. The forum is an advocacy and technical body working to promote ear and hearing care, offer technical support, share experiences, and establish a college of ENT surgeons, audiologists and speech therapists for human resource development in the region.

A strategic planning meeting of the WHO collaborating centres for prevention of deafness and hearing loss was organized in Beijing, China in November 2017. The meeting was hosted by the Beijing Tongren Hospital. 22 members from 11 different centers participated and discussed the future actions of the network of formal and informal centres working in collaboration with WHO. <http://www.who.int/deafness/news/network/en/>

Participation in the meeting of the Clinical Consortium for ageing: The meeting was organized by the Department on Ageing and Life course in Geneva in November 2017. It brought together various stakeholders in the field to discuss possibilities for provision of services at grassroots levels, including hearing screening.



Stakeholders consultation for PDH at WHO HQ in Geneva, Switzerland

The third meeting of the regional forum (in the regional of Americas) on ear and hearing care was held at Bogota, Colombia in November 2017. Experts from the region met to share updates on country activities and to revise the strategic regional plan for action in ear and hearing care.

A Stakeholders' Consultation for WHO's programme on hearing was organized at its headquarters in Geneva in July 2017, to discuss the implementation of the resolution WHA70.13. Over a hundred participants representing professional groups, service providers, research groups, journals, nongovernmental organizations, civil society groups, WHO regional and selected country offices, selected governments, other UN agencies and industry partners debated the means to promote global action on hearing loss. Discussions focused on the World Hearing Day, the development of global alliance on hearing and a world report on hearing.

WHO GATE Initiative: Participation and technical inputs for the WHO GATE initiative, to support inclusion of hearing devices in the list of priority assistive products and training resources.

Planned activities for 2018

- WHO-ITU consultation on Make Listening Safe will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 7-8 February 2018.
- World Hearing Day will be observed with the theme 'Hear the future.' Materials will be made available shortly. Partners are invited to register their events and planned activities online at <http://www.who.int/deafness/world-hearing-day/whd-2018-events/en/>
- World Report on Hearing: to be outlined, background reviews developed and draft version prepared in 2018. Meetings of the guidance groups will be held during the year.
- WHO-ITU standards for safe listening devices to be finalized in 2018.
- The following documents are expected to be launched in 2018:
 - i. Handbook for ear and hearing prevalence survey
 - ii. Ear and hearing care: strategies and current practices;
 - iii. Ear and hearing care: indicators
 - iv. Handbook on advocacy for ear and hearing care
- Collaboration with
 - i. WHO programme on school health to develop school health screening guidelines
 - ii. WHO department for ageing and life-course to develop policy recommendations for implementation of the ICope guidelines
 - iii. WHO programme on assistive technology to improve access to hearing aid technology in WHO MS.
 - iv. Collaboration with the WHO programmes on disability and rehabilitation.
- 2nd meeting of the East and Central African EHC Regional Forum to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in August 2018.
- Multi-country consultation for promotion of ear and hearing care in the region of Europe to be held in Moscow, Russia in November 2018.
- 3rd Stakeholders consultation for WHO PDH will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 3-4 July 2018.
- An adhoc consultation on PEHC training resources will be held in Geneva in July 2018.



←World Hearing Day 2018 announcement

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<http://www.who.int/deafness/en/>