Annual Report
(2014)

Prevention of Deafness and Hearing Loss

World Health Organization
The WHO programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss is working with the mandate provided by the World Health Assembly resolution, WHA48.9, 1995 to promote hearing care as part of primary health care within its Member States (MS).

The programme vision:
A world in which no person lives with hearing loss due to preventable causes and those with unavoidable hearing loss can achieve their full potential through rehabilitation, education and empowerment.

The programme is working with the mission to establish community-based, sustainable and inclusive programmes for prevention and management of hearing loss, integrated within the primary health care systems of WHO's Member States.

The objectives (2014-17) are:
1. To advocate for increased political and financial commitment of Member States and other stakeholders for hearing care by generating and using evidence.

2. To develop and implement national hearing care plans, programmes and policies within the framework of the primary health care in WHO MS.

3. To create suitable tools for promoting hearing care in WHO MS.

4. To effectively engage partners from different sectors to strengthen and improve hearing care.
Activities undertaken in 2014

Objective 1: To advocate for increased political and financial commitment of Member States and other stakeholders for hearing care by generating and using evidence.

1. **Release of the WHO Multi-Country Assessment of National Capacity to Provide Hearing Care:** A Member State survey was carried out from 2012-13 to assess the availability of epidemiological data, human resources and national plans for hearing care in countries across the world. The information received from Member states was analyzed and reported. The report was launched on 3 March 2014.  
   [http://www.who.int/pbd/publications/WHOReportHearingCare_Englishweb.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/pbd/publications/WHOReportHearingCare_Englishweb.pdf?ua=1)

2. **International Ear Care Day: 3 March 2014**  

   The theme for the International Ear Care Day was *Ear Care Can Avoid Hearing Loss.*

   The purpose was to raise awareness and promote community-based activities for hearing care, with special focus on preventable causes such as otitis media, trauma and wax. Some of the activities undertaken were:


   - Media campaign through WHO internet site, intranet and social media reaching over 15 million users worldwide.

   - Awareness materials including posters, banners and a YouTube video were developed and released.

   - Hearing screening activities were undertaken at the WHO headquarters as well as in many of the Member States.
Most WHO CCs and many Member States undertook activities to mark this day including organization of walks, concerts, awareness sessions, meetings with policy-makers, screening camps and provision of medical and surgical services. Many partner organizations shared the information through their websites and supported the Day through a variety of activities.

3. **A session on hearing loss was organized at the World Health Summit held in Berlin, Germany on 20 October 2014.** This initiative was led by Dr. Manfred Gross, Head of, Department of Audiology and Phoniatrics, University of Berlin. As a follow-up to this session a statement for release by the German National Academy of Science Leopoldina is under preparation.

4. **The following articles were contributed in scientific journals:**
   - Community Journal of Ear and Hearing Health: Planning for a hearing screening programme in neonates and infants.
   - Journal of Laryngology and Otology: Promoting ear and hearing care: the WHO perspective

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**Objective 2: To develop and implement national hearing care plans, programmes and policies within the framework of the primary health care in WHO MS.**

1. **A Regional Workshop for development of regional strategic framework on hearing care** “Taller Regional Ops-Oms Para El Desarrollo Del Marco Estratégico Regional De La Salud Del Oido Y La Audicion (2014-2019)” was held in Bogota, Columbia from 28-30 January 2014. The meeting was attended by 8 Member States from Region of the Americas. A regional forum “Foro Del Cuidado Del Oido Y La Audicion” was established. Following the workshop a “Regional strategy for hearing care 2014-16”
was finalized. The meeting was supported by the WHO Regional Office for the Americas and CBM.

2. **A report on Status of Ear and Hearing Care in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**
   was developed with inputs from Member States through collaboration with the Regional Office.

3. **The Technical Officer participated in the conference of the Pan-African Federation of Otolaryngological Societies** (17-19 July 2014). Presentations outlining the role of WHO in promoting ear and hearing care at global, regional and national level were made.

4. **Validation of implementation plan for National Strategy for Prevention of Hearing Loss in Morocco from 8 to 10 April 2014.** A national validation workshop was held with key professionals, representatives of Ministry of Health, School Health, Ministry of Education, WHO and NGOs.

5. **National Plan for Ear and Hearing Care is under implementation in Nicaragua and Malawi.**

6. **A meeting with the Minister for Health and Community Development in Zambia and National Coordinator for eye and ear care, Ministry of Health was held.** The meeting was part of a seminar on ear and hearing care organized by CBM in Lusaka on 20 June 2014. The development process for the national strategy for ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) services in Zambia has been initiated.

7. **Meeting was held with the Director of Health Services and other members of Ministry of Health in Kenya in July 2014** to sensitize them on the need and possible strategies for hearing care. Support is being provided to the Ministry and taskforce to develop a comprehensive hearing care plan.

8. **Support was provided to Chile and Peru in planning and implementation of infant hearing screening programmes.**

9. Support is being provided to Zimbabwe and Indonesia who are in the process of developing their national strategies for hearing care.
10. Participated in the Public Health Planning for Hearing Impairment course
organized by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in:

- Lima, Peru: February 2014 (through video-link)
- Nairobi, Kenya: April 2014 (through video-link)
- Hyderabad, India: September 2014 (through video-link)
- Cape Town, South Africa: November 2013 (through video-link)

**Objective 3: To create suitable tools for promoting hearing care in WHO MS.**

1. **Development of preferred product profile for hearing aids in LMIC:** following up on the WHO ad hoc consultation on hearing devices technology held in Geneva in March 2013, the development of suitable ‘preferred product profiles’ for hearing aids in LMICs was completed in 2014.

2. **Development of the Make Listening Safe campaign:** Background and materials for information products were developed in 2014 to support the Make Listening Safe campaign which will be launched in March 2015. This includes:
   - Conduct of meta-analysis for estimation of risk of hearing loss posed by exposure to recreational noise.
   - Setting up a working group for development of a review on hearing loss due to recreational exposure to loud sounds.
   - Developing a factsheet on ‘Make Listening Safe’ to provide evidence-based information for reducing the risk of noise-induced hearing loss among adolescents and young adults.

3. **Proposal for development of a toolkit for promotion of hearing care in WHO Member States** has been developed and submitted for funding to partner agencies.

4. **Development of a background paper on Ageing and Hearing Loss for the World Report on Ageing.** The paper is being developed through a working group led by
Dr. Adrian Davis and Dr. Kelly Tremblay. The paper will serve as the information source for the World Ageing Report and will be completed in 2015.

5. **Technical support was provided for the development of WHO Community Noise Guidelines for the European Region.** The guidelines are expected to be finalized in 2015.

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**Objective 4. To effectively engage partners from different sectors to strengthen and improve hearing care.**

1. **WHO network of collaborating centres for prevention of deafness:** constant engagement with the network of collaborating centres through the year, including re-designation of one centre. Informal collaboration has been developed with John Hopkins University, United States.

2. **International Society of Audiology (ISA):**
   a. World Congress of Audiology, Brisbane, Australia (4-6 May 2014): A presentation on prevention of deafness and hearing loss: promoting primary ear and hearing care’ was organized as part of the Congress.
   b. A meeting was held with board members to explore areas of common interest for future collaboration.
   c. Development of proposal for admission of ISA as an organization in official relations with WHO.

3. **International Federation of Otolaryngological Societies (IFOS):**
   a. Triennial review of IFOS’ status as an organization in official relations with WHO and development of 3-year work-plan.
b. Made a presentation regarding the WHO programme for prevention of deafness at the SFORL conference organized by the IFOS in Paris, France on 13 October 2014.

c. Planning for a collaborative IFOS-WHO plenary session on primary ear and hearing care at the ENT World Congress to be held in Paris in 2017 initiated, in discussion with Prof Bernard Fraysse, President, and Dr. Milan Profant, Secretary-General, IFOS.


5. **Triennial review of status of organizations in official relations with WHO** and development of new 3-year work-plans for CBM and International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatics (IALP).

6. **Strengthening partnerships** with traditional partners including Hearing Conservation Council and fostering of new relationships with selected professional bodies, INGOs, associations of manufacturers and disabled persons-organizations.

7. **Collaboration with other departments within WHO**
   - Ageing and Life-Course department: collaboration to promote inclusion of hearing care in newly developing programmes and initiatives on ageing.
     - Member of task force on Ageing and life-course.
     - Development of a national plan for Improving Health Care Services for Older Adults with Age-related Hearing Loss in Ghana, with technical support from PDH.
     - Technical support for development of a policy brief on hearing care in elderly.
• Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) department: a webpage on otitis media was developed and launched in March 2014. The page is hosted on the WHO NTD website. [http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/diseases/otitis/en/](http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/diseases/otitis/en/)

• Disability and Rehabilitation:
  o Collaboration for development of Guidelines for rehabilitation of persons with disability.
  o Collaboration for integration of hearing into the WHO Model Disability survey.

• Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property: member of task force for the development of the GATE initiative, which will serve to promote access to essential assistive devices including hearing devices in low- and middle-income countries.
International Ear Care Day 2014: activities