Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our first Audiology newsletter, hopefully over the coming editions you will find some up-to-date and useful articles about Audiology. We hope to issue 3-4 editions of this newsletter each year, this will depend on the number of submissions from you, the Audiology community. We are aiming for the next edition to be published in December, so we look forward to your news stories for inclusion.

The names and emails of people you can send your submissions to are on the back page of this newsletter. Examples of submissions can be in the form of articles, stories, charity coffee mornings info and dates or whatever you may feel is applicable to this newsletter, also photos or pictures of events that have taken place, if you have them.

Aisling Heffernan has recently been appointed as the Project Manager for the National Clinical Programme for Audiology on a part-time basis. Aisling has a background as a Speech & Language Therapy Manager and has previously project managed service developments within the rehabilitative services setting.

Following the publication of the National Audiology Review in April, the Audiology Service has now become a National Clinical Programme under the Clinical Strategy & Programmes Directorate (CSPD). The CSPD was established to improve patient care throughout the health system. It is led by Dr Barry White & Mr Tony O’Brien, and is charged with defining how health services are delivered, measured and resourced.

Each of the National Clinical Programmes are led by a Clinical Lead. The programmes establish a working group which include consultant, GP, nursing and allied health professional, management, and regional representatives, who are bringing together experience and expertise from services around the country. Professor John Bamford is the interim (part-time) Clinical Lead for the Audiology Programme until a permanent position can be advertised and filled. The National Audiology Review Group (NARG) will take on the role of the working group. Aisling Heffernan aisling.heffernan@hse.ie has recently been appointed as the Project Manager for the National Clinical Programme for Audiology on a part-time basis.

Regional Leads for Audiology

The NARG review recommended the introduction of four Regional Clinical Lead posts. Unfortunately, along with the National Clinical Lead position, these posts are waiting to be sanctioned by the Department of Finance. In the interim, four Regional Administrative Leads have been identified to provide a regional link to Audiology Staff.

The Regional Leads are:

HSE DNE: Aisling Regan, Operations Manager, Audiology Services, Dublin, Wicklow & Kildare.
HSE DML: Gerry Raleigh, General Manager, Tullamore General Hospital, Tullamore, Offaly.
HSE South: Deirdre Scully, Integrated Services Manager, Cork.
HSE West: Martin Greaney, General Manager, Mayo.
Sponsored MSc Programmes

**UK Programme:**
The HSE are sponsoring twelve candidates to attend the University of Manchester and the University of Southampton to complete an MSc in Audiology designed primarily for new entrants to the profession. These twelve candidates will attend the MSc from 2011-2012. A clinical training year will be arranged for them from 2012-2013.

There is a meeting scheduled for September with IAA representatives and others to begin the planning of this year. The aim of this programme is to attract new entrants to the workforce: candidates with a suitable first degree, background and motivation. It is hoped that these candidates will add to the workforce numbers in 2013.

The interview for applicants has already taken place, between 10-12 Students will be starting their MSc this month. We wish them well in their studies.

**UCC Programme:**
Current Audiology Staff members can apply for HSE funding to complete advanced audiology modules, designed for those already in the profession, at an MSc level at UCC. Provided candidates are able to gain admission to the UCC modules by meeting their entry requirements, and the training is seen to be in the interests of the service (including time off for attendance), the HSE Audiology Programme will support them by covering the UCC fees. For those with the required ability, these modules can be built up over a minimum of two years into a postgraduate award at Diploma or MSc level. The HSE will also consider supporting justified cases to other CPD opportunities; enquiries to Aisling Heffernan.

Ms. Elaine Howlin, Senior Audiological Scientist recently submitted and was approved to run a BSA accredited Otoscopy & Impression taking course for non clinical staff.

The aim of this course is to evolve our community audiology service which deal with rehabilitation of adults and children with hearing loss by training non audiologist staff to perform otoscopy and impression taking. The course will ensure that non-audiologist staff can perform these tasks safely, correctly and in accordance with current BSA recommended procedures.

Attendance at the course to date has included technical staff, clerical staff, audiologists, audiology assistants and nursing staff from local elderly care facilities. This initiative has helped to make our services more user friendly and accessible for the hearing aid user.

For more information on the above course please contact:
Audiology Department, HSE, 44 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1
PH: 01 8747726
Email: audiology@hse.ie
From April 26th 2011 parents of all babies born at Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) will be offered a hearing screening test for their baby prior to being discharged from hospital. The test is available free-of-charge for all babies. Any baby who does not have a clear response in one or both ears from the test will be referred for a full audiological (hearing) assessment at an Audiology Clinic in Cork University Hospital (CUH) and seen shortly after discharge.

Mr Peter O’Sullivan, Consultant Ear Nose and Throat Surgeon, CUH/SIVUH and Chairperson of the Cork Newborn Hearing Screening Implementation Group, said that he was, “delighted that Cork University Maternity Hospital had been chosen as the first hospital in Ireland to implement the national Newborn Hearing Screening Programme.”

Dr Brendan Paul Murphy, Consultant Neonatologist, at Cork University Maternity Hospital said “that the hospital’s newest screening programme for babies aims to identify hearing impairment as soon as possible after birth to give babies a better chance of developing speech and language skills and making the most of social and emotional interaction from an early age.”

The hearing test will be carried out, by a trained hearing screener, while the baby is settled or sleeping, usually at the mother’s bedside. Babies born through the HSE’s homebirths scheme will also be included in the programme. Arrangements are in place to have these babies’ hearing tested at an outpatients clinic at the hospital within weeks of the babies’ birth.

The referral rates for babies to the HSE Audiology Clinic who fail the test will be relatively low (estimated at about 2-4% of all babies tested).

Ms. Geraldine Keohane, Director of Midwifery, CUMH said that “the newborn hearing screening programme is a welcome new venture at Cork University Maternity Hospital benefiting both newborns and their families.”

Ms Keohane welcomed the screeners as they take up their new positions and thanked the midwives and other hospital staff for assisting them as they commence duty. “

Tony McNamara, CEO, CUH thanked all the staff involved for ensuring that the programme got underway which is a collaborative effort from both hospital and staff based in community services. He emphasised the benefits of the programme to parents and babies and said “parents benefit from knowing their child has a hearing loss early as they are empowered to make informed choices and get the support they need. Early identification of hearing loss, followed by good support from health, education and social care can dramatically improve the child’s language and communication, leading to better educational outcomes.” Further information is available on
Motivational Interviewing from the Northwest
- Paricia Barr
Snr Audiology Scientist

Community audiology staff in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal recently attended an introductory one day workshop on ‘Motivational Interviewing’ (M.I.) as provided by the Sligo/Leitrim HSE staff training unit free of charge.

M.I. was a topic at last year’s BAA conference in November 2010. It is described in an article by Dr Douglas Beck in the BAA Magazine, Issue 19, Winter 2010/2011 as ‘a conversational and counselling style which helps direct the conversational discourse to accomplish whatever is ...in the best interest of the patient’.

Motivational interviewing can be used in tandem with traditional history-taking and initial conversations with the client. It can help frame the root issues of concern to the client. It allows the audiologist to explore the important information about the client, their lifestyle and situations that are difficult for them and, so better prepare the client for testing and hearing aid fitting.

We are all familiar with clients and their families who are not yet ready to accept their hearing loss or hearing aids and others who have negative and/or unrealistic expectations of hearing aid fittings. Staff members varied in their support for the workshop principles as applicable to clients attending hearing aid clinics.

Some clinicians felt that motivational interviewing provides a solid basis for clinicians to reframe the conversation around issues of acceptance and expectations/motivation in aural rehabilitation. Others felt that it was less applicable due to some of the intrinsic difficulties in conversing with elderly clients about their hearing loss.

If you have a chance to explore Motivational Interviewing, I would recommend it as a useful clinical tool.

National Real Ear Measurement Training
- Elaine Farrelly
Chief Audiologist

"The purpose of REM is to compare and verify the real-ear acoustical characteristics of a hearing aid with a prescription target" (BSA Recommended Procedures for REM, 2007).

In March 2010 two audiology staff from North Great Georges Street attended a Real Ear Measurement training course in the Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham. Upon return to Ireland, they co-facilitated a training programme for HSE staff nationwide in preparation for the HSE Audiology Service adapting digital signal processing (DSP) hearing aids. Trainees receive a pre-learning questionnaire; some preparatory reading material; attend a lecture; and a hands-on training session.

The one-day course is then followed by two or more training days in an audiology clinic with HSE clients. Trainees are required to carry out an assessment at the end of their training. Up to 30 staff have availed of this training to date.

For more information on the above course contact:
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Central Auditory Processing Disorders (C)APD is a disorder where individuals have difficulty processing what they hear, even when they have normal hearing. It is estimated that 3-10% of the population have some degree of (C)APD. At present there is no service in Ireland to assess, diagnose and treat people with (C)APD (Logue-Kennedy et al, 2010).

Thanks to money raised for the Children’s University Hospital (CUH) by a parent who is aware of the lack of (C)APD services for children in Ireland, Martin Cromb (Chief Audiologist) & Louise McCusker (Senior Audiologist) were able to visit South Dakota for the last 2 weeks in June. The visit facilitated training with one of the world experts in the (C)APD field, Professor Teri James Bellis. The visit consisted of opportunities such as attending Prof. Bellis’s (C)APD class for her AUD/Doctorial students, also observing patients being assessed & counselled and practical training on how to perform (C)APD diagnostic assessments at Prof. Bellis’s (C)APD assessment clinic.

Further to this visit we received notification that funding had been approved by the CUH Fundraising Office (subject to the normal requirements) to support a collaborative research project in conjunction with Professor Bellis. The purpose of the project is to establish Irish normative data for American Academy of Audiology recommended (C)APD diagnostic tests. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the future development of a service for children with (C)APD in Ireland.

The team are hoping to start the project shortly, which will require the participation of typically-developing children ranging from 7 to 13 years of age and young adults from 18 to 24 years of age. If you are interested in finding out more about the project please contact Martin on martin.cromb@cuh.ie for more information.

Audiology Social Updates:

We would like to welcome Eimear Crawford to our team in the Northwest as a fulltime clinician. Eimear is finalising her clinical competency exams in September in Portsmouth U.K., following completion of her M.Sc. in 2009 and has been working part time within our department over the past 20 months.

We would like to congratulate Amy Lawlor (Audiologist) and Keith Murphy on their recent nuptials in Lanzarote.

We would also like to congratulate Laura Seales (Audiologist) and partner Dave Flynn on their recent arrival, baby Molly Flynn.

Please send any submissions and pictures to the following:

Aisling Regan: aisling.regan@hse.ie
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