

BIAP Recommendation 07/6:

Cochlear implant in elderly

Foreword

This document presents a Recommendation by the International Bureau for Audiophonology BIAP.

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Introduction

Cochlear implantation must not be limited by considerations such as age, life expectancy and healthcare costs.

Each case needs to be specifically assessed and managed by a multidisciplinary team.

Recommendation

In the elderly, indications for cochlear implantation will be based on the following criteria:

Audiological indications: severe or profound progressive deafness, with hearing aid inefficacy on at least one side, and with no radiological contraindications.

Additional evaluations:

1. Ability to tolerate general anaesthesia. Progressive disease does not of itself automatically rule out the procedure. Local anaesthesia may be used as alternative.
2. Screening for early cognitive problems, the presence of which would justify a specific neuropsychological assessment.
3. Psychological assessment:
 - a. Screening and evaluation of mental problems by a psychologist, which could require input from a psychiatrist.
 - b. Evaluation of the impact of hearing loss, the subject's expectations and fears and his/her motivation.
 - c. Evaluation of family support and expectations.
4. Evaluation of the subject's autonomy in the context of potential family support. Validation of a proper understanding of the practical aspects: ease of use, accessories (Cf. recommendation 06/13.14.15)

5. Carrying out sensory-motor tests (vestibular, neurological, visual, praxis...). The results of vestibular tests may influence the choice of which side to implant, and predict possible postoperative balance problems.

The results of the evaluations should be discussed within the context of a multidisciplinary team, to confirm the indication.

It is advisable to ensure that the conditions needed for speech and language re-education, speech therapy, are in place (feasibility, travel, support...). The patient must be informed about this.

The patient will be given written support materials indicating the recommended follow-up protocol in terms of consultations, fittings and postoperative speech and language re-education.

Following cochlear implantation, the patient should be regularly monitored to ensure that there are no skin complications, balance problems, or psychological fragility.

This recommendation was created and approved in multidisciplinary cooperation between professionals of all audiophonologic disciplines, which are medicine, pedagogy, speech therapy, psychology and hearing instrument audiology.

The original language of this document is English.

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