

BIAP Recommendation 02/1:

Audiometric Classification of Hearing Impairments

General foreword

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Introduction

In most cases, hearing impairments are due to the loss of sound perception and, particularly, of speech perception.

Speech is made up of both acute and low-pitched sounds of highly-varied acoustic power. It cannot be measured by means of a single average acoustic level.

Recommendation

After a clinical examination has been realized, an audiometric measuring can be done in satisfactory acoustic conditions. It shows a loss in dB, compared with normal hearing level (dB H.L.), with reference to ISO standards.

An average tone loss is calculated, taking as a starting point the loss in dB at various frequencies: 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz and 4000 Hz. A frequency which is not perceived is considered as a loss of 120 dB. The total amount is calculated, divided by 4 and rounded up to the nearest unit.

In the event of an asymmetric hearing loss of more than 15 dB, the average loss level, expressed in dB, is multiplied by 7 for the "good" ear and by 3 for the "bad" ear. The total is then divided by 10.

I. Normal or subnormal hearing

The average tone loss is below 20 dB.

Mild tone disorder with no social consequences.

II. Mild hearing loss

Average tone loss between 21 and 40 dB.

Speech is perceived if the voice is normal, difficulties arise if the voice is low-pitched or distant from the subject.

Most of the daily life noises are perceived.

III. Moderate hearing loss

- 1st degree: average tone loss between 41 and 55 dB.
- 2nd degree: average tone loss between 56 and 70 dB.

Speech is perceived if the voice is loud. The subject understands better what is being said if he can see his/her interlocutor.

Some daily life noises are still perceived.

IV. Severe hearing loss

- 1st degree: average tone loss between 71 and 80 dB.
- 2nd degree: average tone loss between 81 and 90 dB.

Speech is perceived if the voice is loud and close to the ear.

Loud noises are perceived.

V. Very severe hearing loss

- 1st degree: average tone loss between 91 and 100 dB.
- 2nd degree: average tone loss between 101 and 110 dB.
- 3rd degree: average tone loss between 111 and 119 dB.

Speech is not perceived.

Only very loud noises are perceived.

VI. Total hearing loss - Cophosis

Average tone loss over 120 dB.

Nothing is perceived.

This recommendation was created and approved in a 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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