Research protocol: key questions

Dr Shelly Chadha
Technical Officer,
Prevention of Deafness and Hearing loss

World Health Organization
Purpose

This research protocol for assessment of recreational noise-induced hearing loss (RNIHL) is to be developed to facilitate the implementation of uniform procedures by researchers in order to enhance successful comparison of their results. It will

- provide a standardized methodology for assessment of hearing loss (and tinnitus) occurrence due to exposure to sounds in recreational settings;

- assist researchers working in this field in data collection and analysis;

- facilitate comparison and compilation of data from different studies.
Key issues

What to assess?

- Permanent hearing loss occurring as a result of exposure to loud sounds;
- *Tinnitus* (if included, criteria will need to be established as to what constitutes tinnitus in these cases).
Key issues

Whom to test?

- Age group/s: eg the population included may be one or more of the following groups: 4-12, 12-20, 20-35, 35-60, above 60 years. Consistency in grouping would facilitate comparison of data.

- Criteria for defining the study group: to be specified eg
  - Listening through personal audio systems for .....hours, .....number of days per week or listening at volumes above...... level
  - Exposure in recreational venues .........................how to establish the level of exposure?

- Is a control group required: mandatory, desirable, optional…?
Key issues

- Methodology: Should sampling methodology be suggested?
**Key issues**

- **How to test?**
  - When to test?
  - Where to test?
  - How to test?
  - Who will test?
  - Other examination: otoscopy, tympanometry (….is it required?) to rule out ear disease
Key issues

What are other aspects to be considered?

- Ethical clearance/issues
- Raising awareness on safe listening through the study
- Research team and equipment required for testing
- Others....