WHO programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss: promoting ear and hearing care

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World Health Organization
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Is United Nations specialized agency for health

- Headquarters in Geneva
- 6 Regional offices
- 148 country offices in all LMICs
- Close collaboration with Ministries
- Numerous partners

Core tasks:
- Determining global health agenda
- Health Promotion and advocacy
- Technical support to countries for data collection and policy development
- Epidemiological Surveillance
World Health Assembly

- An annual gathering of health policy-making of the 194 countries which are Member States of UN.
- Discuss and agree on global health issues and policies to address them.
- Resolutions adopted provide a roadmap to countries and guide public health action.
Relevance of WHA resolutions

- Provides overall direction to policy makers regarding the health issue
- Highlights the importance of public health action to address that issue
- Provides stakeholders with a useful tool for political advocacy
What does the resolution say?

- Draws attention to the high prevalence of hearing loss; its impact; preventability and availability of suitable interventions to address it.
- It refers to the importance of addressing hearing loss to achieve the SDGs.
Urges Member States to

1. integrate strategies for prevention of hearing loss within the framework of their health care systems.
2. collect high-quality population-based data.
3. establish suitable training programmes.
4. ensure the highest possible coverage of vaccination.
5. develop, implement and monitor screening programmes.
6. improve access to affordable, cost-effective, high-quality, assistive hearing technologies and products.
7. improve access to communication through sign language and captioning services.
Asks WHO to undertake 5 actions

1. To prepare a world report on hearing, based on the best-available scientific evidence;
2. To provide technical support to Member States in collecting data, planning national strategies, raising awareness, screening, training and provision of assistive technologies;
3. To prepare a toolkit of comprehensive technical support for MS.
4. To collaborate with all stakeholders for prevention of NIHL due to recreational exposure.
5. To undertake evidence-based advocacy through World Hearing Day.
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World Hearing Day:  3 March
2013: Hearing care for healthy ageing
2014: Ear care can avoid hearing loss
2015: Make Listening Safe
2016: Childhood hearing loss: act now, here is how!
2017: Action for hearing loss: make a sound investment
2018: Hear the future!

http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/en/
Evidence-based advocacy

Need for action on hearing loss

Unaddressed hearing loss poses a high cost to the economy globally.

$750 billion annually

Millions of people in the world have hearing loss that can be treated or prevented.

Make Listening Safe

KEY FACTS

- **1.1 billion** young people worldwide are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices.
- **Over 43 million** people 12-35 years live with disabling hearing loss.

Among young people 12-35 years in middle- and high-income countries:

- **Nearly 50%** listen to unsafe levels of sound through personal audio devices (MP3 players, smartphones, and others).
- **Around 40%** are exposed to potentially damaging levels of sound at nightclubs, bars and sporting events.

32 million children live with disabling hearing loss.

60% of childhood hearing loss is preventable.

17% birth-related causes.

Strategies for prevention and care:

Act now, here's how!

Childhood hearing loss
To prepare a World Report on Hearing

Objectives
1. Highlight the rising prevalence of hearing loss.
2. Draw attention to research illustrating the broader consequences of hearing loss.
3. Document scientific evidence and country experiences on the approaches used to build patient-centred comprehensive EHC services.
4. Raise awareness among policymakers for attention to this area.

- Redefine the ear and hearing care agenda
- Involvement of all stakeholders and MS
- Advocacy tool
- Provide future direction
Provide technical support to Member States for implementation of public health strategies:

- Promote regional collaborations.
- Support country-level planning and implementation.
Technical support to countries

‘Toolkit of comprehensive technical support to assist countries in planning of EHC strategies; development of screening services; human resource training; awareness creation and provision of devices and rehabilitation.

World Health Organization
Collaborate with stakeholders for prevention of NIHL due to recreational exposure.

Vision: to ensure that people of all ages can enjoy listening with full protection of their hearing.
Approach

Inform: raise awareness

Enable: provide tools and enabling environment

Evidence-based

Collaborative approach
Key areas of work

- Global standards for safe listening devices: in collaboration with ITU.
  - *Regulatory framework for control of recreational sound exposure.*

- Public health campaign for listening behaviour change:
  - Safe listening app
  - Social media campaign
  - Safe listening messages
Current status

- Drafting of standards for SLD
- Policy brief for inclusion of communication aspects into safe listening standards developed and integrated.
- Preparation of background materials
- Review of exposure limits in adults and children
- Research protocol for assessment of NIHL
- Communication strategy
- An educational safe listening app under preparation
- Information webpages
- Information products developed incl. short videos
- Social media outreach
- Sensitization of governments, where possible
Purpose of this consultation

Drive this initiative further by reviewing the progress till now, addressing key issues and planning next steps.

Review and refine the proposed standards for safe listening devices

Determine dissemination strategy for standards and safe listening messages

Finalize the research protocol

Outline process for development of a regulatory framework for control recreational sound exposure
I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.

— Mother Teresa —

Thank you!