April 30, 2021

Dear JSLHR Editorial Staff,

We hereby submit our manuscript, *“****Characterizing North Carolina's Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Infants and Toddlers: Predictors of Vocabulary, Diagnosis, and Intervention”*** for consideration as a **research article*.*** This paper reports on the demographic and audiological characteristics, vocabulary outcomes, and clinical milestones within a diverse sample of 100 children receiving early intervention services for hearing loss in North Carolina.

This work makes 3 central contributions relevant to JSLHR’s readership.

1. Our sample includes the full range of children receiving early intervention services, quantifying the frequency and co-occurrence of comorbidities, audiological characteristics, language and communication background, and clinical services. Importantly, this reflects the immense diversity of the pediatric Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing population, contextualizing the findings of more tightly-controlled experimental work.
2. We find that Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing children in our sample showed large spoken language vocabulary delays relative to hearing peers, and model the set of audiological and clinical variables that best account for variance in this delay, relative to a large sample of children with typical hearing abilities.
3. We find that many children did not receive hearing loss diagnosis and intervention by the federally recommended 1-3-6 guidelines (i.e., screening by 1 month of age, diagnosis by 3 months, intervention by 6 months). Again, we model the predictors that best account for these delays, finding a mix of hearing-, health-, and home-related variables. On this basis we provide recommendations for how we may be able to improve support for DHH children.

We believe this manuscript would be of particular interest to the readership of JSLHR, due to its important implications for past, present and future research on children with hearing loss; early intervention practices; and public policy.

We note that due to the comprehensive literature review and extended data-based report our work provides, this paper exceeds the recommended length of 40 pages. We are of course open to shortening it as the editor or reviewers see fit.

We suggest the following researchers as potential unbiased expert reviewers:

* Dr. Hillary Ganek (pediatric hearing loss; social determinants of language outcomes); [hganek@uwo.ca](mailto:hganek@uwo.ca)
* Dr. Sophie Ambrose (language development of children with hearing loss); [sophie.ambrose@boystown.org](mailto:sophie.ambrose@boystown.org)
* Dr. Danielle Matthews (deafness, language development); [danielle.matthews@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:danielle.matthews@sheffield.ac.uk)

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Erin Campbell and Elika Bergelson

Duke University, Department of Psychology & Neuroscience