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Hearing Aids: Updates and New Trends

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HEARING AIDS: UPDATES AND NEW TRENDS

Introduction:

Hearing aids are essential tools in the practice of ENT. This helps our patients to hear better. As ENT practitioners, we need to understand how it works, when to prescribe it and what tests the patient has to undergo in order for us to make appropriate choices for our patients.

Objective:

It is the objective of this lecture to give an insight on how a hearing aid works. Who are the people who would be needing to wear the device, the different types of hearing aids available and how to evaluate the effectivity of these devices once the patient uses them.

For a successful use of amplification, the patient, especially in the adult population, has to have the motivation to wear the device by accepting that he needs this to hear better. In children, the one's who underwent the hearing screening are easily identified. But for those who did not, hearing loss may be missed and diagnosed late. Only when the parents notice that the speech is somewhat delayed are they brought to the clinic for consult.

When to fit hearing aids is a decision made by the ENT upon receiving the hearing test results. In children, we rely on several tests to confirm the hearing loss. In adults, a puretone audiogram with speech tests would suffice.

Hearing aids are miniature electroacoustic devices that amplify sounds. The style of the hearing aids needs to be decided upon before making a purchase. Additional features such as telecoil, FM capability and direct audio input are essential add-ons to make listening more enjoyable.

To assure us that hearing aids are working for the patient there are evaluations such as aided tests and questionnaires on effective listening ability. For the difficult to test patients, we can use the Hear Lab to detect if they can indeed hear using the hearing aids.