

Hearing loss: The impact of hearing loss.

NID Training Disability Diary

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NID Training NPC



Introduction

Hearing loss is identified when persons are unable to recognize speech and other sounds and if their language development has been stunted or delayed. According to the World Health Organisation, about 5% of the world's population (about 466 million people) suffers from hearing loss. About one third of affected people are over 65, most of whom are from low- and middle-income places like sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, many children also have hearing loss. WHO also estimates that by 2050 more than one in every 10 people, worldwide, will have disabling hearing loss because of exposure to excessive noise, certain infectious diseases, the use of certain drugs, genetic conditions, complications at birth, chronic ear infections, and ageing (WHO & WB, 2011). In fact, the increase in incidence of hearing loss can be seen as an epidemic, mainly because of life-style changes (Engelbrecht, 2017).

Discussion

Children with hearing loss in developing countries rarely receive any schooling. In South Africa there is a substantial population of people with disabilities who are faced with the challenges of limited access to education and resulting poverty. Many children with hearing loss who are unable to attend special schools are either left uneducated or they attend mainstream schools where they face many challenges (Phiri, 2015).

A child who cannot hear the speech of other people from birth or soon afterwards cannot learn speech and language spontaneously, as do hearing children. Without speech and hearing, delay in language acquisition occurs, resulting in difficulty developing positive interpersonal relationships, ability to learn, and achieve appropriate educational levels (Scott & Dostal, 2019).

Hearing loss can also result in fatigue because of the emotional and physical effort it takes to communicate and cope in a hearing world (Holman et al. 2019). It might also have an impact on a person's balance and increase the risk of falling.

Conclusion

Hearing loss is increasing, and those who are affected often suffer discrimination, isolation, unemployment and poverty. If persons with hearing loss are not included into mainstream society and are not afforded the same education and employment opportunities as the hearing community, the country will deny itself of a valuable workforce

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