

Impact of the COVID -19 pandemic on the management of congenital deafness in the pediatric population



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Abstract

The sense of hearing is perhaps the most important of the five special senses the human possesses. Deafness is a silent handicap, hence early identification of hearing loss and provision of early access to auditory stimuli is crucial for the development of age-appropriate linguistic competence in a congenitally deaf child. Children of permanent childhood hearing loss are at risk of developing emotional and behavioral difficulties. Cochlear Implantation(CI) has been developed as a recognized clinical therapy for the management of bilateral sensorineural profound deafness with minimal benefit from an optimally fitted digital hearing aid. However, The cochlear implant technology provides access to sound, but, habilitation with a nurturing spoken language environment is what aids in giving meaning to the sound and, this systematic and rigorous training helps attain full auditory potential.

This talk further, throws light on the challenges faced by the families and institutions in providing seamless hearing care to hearing-impaired children due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also brings forth the adequate precautions and robust protocols implemented by institutions in providing a safe environment, before, during, and after the cochlear implant surgery both for the patient and the healthcare worker. It further elucidates possible innovative means executed in reaching out to patients, modification of in-person habilitation sessions, and ways of keeping both the patient and family motivated and not losing them to follow-up during this tiring time. As the world acclimatizes itself to the new normal, mindful utilization of financial and human resources is the need of the hour and paramount in healthcare.

Biography

Ruchima Dham is an accomplished ENT surgeon from the South of India. She has a Fellowship in Implantation otology and has been a mentee of Padmashri Mohan Kameswaran, a renowned International Otolaryngologist. She has won the award for the best poster at Asia Pacific symposium for cochlear implants -2019 in Japan and been awarded many national awards for paper presentations. She is passionate about writing publications and has over a dozen articles in national and international journals. Zealous about academics, she has been faculty at multiple conferences. She is an avid reader, a philosophical soul and a globetrotter.

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