

RISK FACTORS FOR HEARING IMPAIRMENT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL DEAF CHILDREN IN GAZA STRIP, PALESTINE

Hatem Eldabbakeh^{1,2}

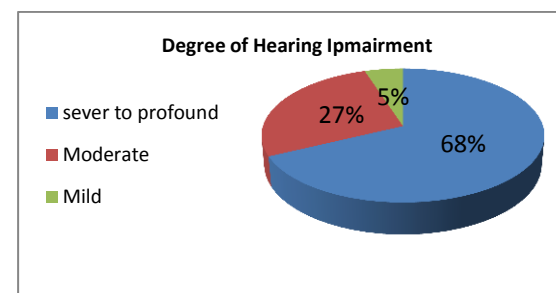
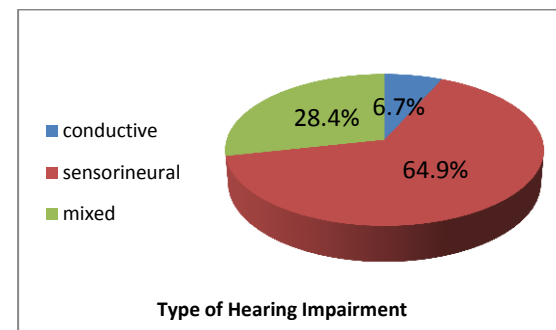
¹Epidemiologist

²Academic Deputy, University College of Ability Development, PRCs, Palestine

Introduction: Around 466 million people worldwide had hearing disability, 34 million of these are children, and it is estimated by 2050 over 900 million people will have disabling hearing loss. The aim of this study was to identify the risk factors associated with hearing impairment among primary school deaf children in Gaza Strip.

Methodology: A retrospective descriptive cross-sectional study design was. It was conducted over a period of 4 months (February to June 2017). Data was collected from consented parents by using a pretested structured interview questionnaire. 100 children were chosen randomly and proportionally according to the school size. Data was entered, managed, and analyzed by using SPSS software version 19.

Results: the participants' response rate was 74%. The mean age of children was 11.5 (± 3.8) years. 71.6% of parents were closed relatives, 82.4% of the children were discovered as deaf before the age 3 years, and 63.5% have another deaf child or more in the family. About 65% of the children had sensorineural hearing loss, 68% had sever to profound hearing impairment, and 8.4% were using hearing aids. The most common identified risk factors associated with hearing impairment rather than consanguinity marriage include: recurrent otitis media and exposure to high noise/explosions 39.1% for each, earwax impaction 29.7%, neonatal jaundice and mother took medicine during pregnancy 24.3% for each, child infected with chickenpox 23%, recurrent tonsillitis 21.6%, ear surgery 17.6%, febrile illnesses 14.9%, and birth asphyxia 13.5%.



Conclusion: This study shown that consanguinity marriage, recurrent otitis media, exposure to noise, earwax impaction, neonatal jaundice and mothers had medicine during pregnancy are risk factors for hearing impairment among school deaf children in Gaza Strip.

"All authors have declared no conflict of interest"