

Methods and new technologies for adult hearing screening

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The objective of work packages WP5 and WP6 of the EU project AHEAD III was to determine criteria for classical and newly developed tests for hearing screening of adults. Three main questions to be answered were: (1) Which methods are available that are able to screen hearing disability in a cost effective and easy way? (2) What are the requirements for suitable testing devices? (3) Should the tests be conducted by the use of special equipment with trained personal at a specific place (clinics, pharmacies, practices, or should the tests persons conduct the test themselves at home using the telephone or the computer with internet access without expert knowledge and without special equipment? To evaluate the feasibility of potential tests, a template was developed to evaluate the different tests by the same criteria. Those criteria were for example the targeted dysfunction, age limitations, requirements of functions and skills other than auditory, instructions required to perform the test, type of test execution (automated/self-test/face-to-face test), interpretation of results (automated/or by examiner), overall test time, site of test (needs for a controlled environ-ment), handling of he technology, reliability of the screening outcome, usefulness of the test results for planning treatment, education/culture/language dependency, hygienic issues, acceptance of the method used, and costs per person screened. To ensure assessment of peripheral and central deficits, more than one test is required. Suitable tests are discussed and recommendations are given.

