

## **Abstract EFAS/DGA 2007**

### **Unified approach to hearing instrument fitting and rehabilitation: Professional end-user opinions in Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK**

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One aim of the European project HearCom (FP6-004171) is the harmonization and optimization of hearing instrument rehabilitation. Therefore, an unified approach in this field was investigated as following.

In a first step a pathway for hearing aid fitting that could draw on best practice in NL, DE and the UK was set up by an expert group. This survey contained both procedures and tests which are in common use in each of the three countries as well as recently developed procedures considered likely to be appropriate for widespread use.

In a second step these procedures and tests were the subject of user evaluations: The users consulted were primarily professionals involved in the fitting of hearing instruments in the three participating countries. The opinions of hearing instrument users and unaided hearing-impaired persons were also included. An online survey was completed by over 100 professionals: The data addressed frequency of use of 83 specific procedures, and professionals' opinions on whether these procedures were acceptable in their current form, or whether they need any improvement.

For most of the procedures, professionals supported the recommendations of the expert group. Some of the proposals of the experts deal with less familiar procedures (e.g. psychoacoustic tests) or procedures which can be performed in many different ways (e.g. speech tests, disability and benefit questionnaires). For these procedures, professionals showed limited evidence of willingness to shift to more novel approaches. Therefore, there is a clear need for both well-targeted educational materials for new procedures and for development of time-efficient methods of administration if a change in best practice should be achieved.

