

Abstract EFAS/DGA 2007

Implementation of a Universal Newborn Hearing Screening programme in existing health services/ a pilot project in the Tyrol

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Background: The Austrian Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) programme, a nursery based two stage OAE-screening, was promoted by a position paper of the Austrian ENT-society in 1995. A centralized tracking of babies who failed the UNHS was not yet available.

Aim of the study: In order to improve efficiency and quality of the follow-up process, a tracking programme based on an already established database was developed in the Tyrol (10 regional hospitals participating).

Methods: The basic data set includes general information on all deliveries in the region as well as specific NHS results, registered anonymously at the Institute of Clinical Epidemiology, which also serves as the central tracking institution (CTI) for hearing screening. The UNHS result is entered in the database record by the professionals performing the screening test in each hospital and is transferred to the CTI. Information on children who did not undergo the screening or who had a 'fail' result is delivered back to each participating hospital quarterly by the CTI on an anonymous record. Information about the result of the follow-up is reported subsequently to the CTI and added to the database.

Results: The programme was implemented 2004 in all Tyrolean nurseries. Up to now, about 17000 births were documented: 91.6 % of the babies passed the UNHS. 1.1 % had a 'fail' result, for 7.3 % no result was documented in the central database.

Conclusion and consequences: Regular information on the current status of the programme provides a great advantage in achieving an early intervention in case of hearing loss. In order to improve efficiency of documentation, regular training and improvement of motivation of the professionals involved in UNHS has to be extended. The 7.3% records without documentation remain a challenge for future work.

