



EFAS Working Group on Audiology and Intellectual Disability

Introduction:

Ear and hearing problems in people with an intellectual disability (ID) are more common than in the general population. In addition the consequences of these problems are more far-reaching for people with ID. People with ID rarely report hearing loss, neither does the people in their direct environment. If they report at all, they do this in a very late stage. Most of their ear and hearing problems remain undetected, un-served and/or under-treated, even in highly developed countries.

Establishment of Working Group:

The Working Group on Audiology & Intellectual Disability (WG AID) is established on 7th March 2015 in Bochum/Germany, with the approval of the EFAS Board.

Goals of Working Group:

The focus group of the WG is people with an Intellectual Disability.

The different goals of the WG are:

1. **Literature:**

Making of a reference list with all relevant literature. Will be very useful information to achieve other goals.

2. **Questionnaire:**

Gathering information on screening and assessing ear, hearing, vestibular problems in people with an intellectual disability in different European countries by the use of a questionnaire.

3. **Guidelines:**

WG decided to develop guidelines instead of protocols. Guidelines can be used on European level, and can be adapted to protocols on National level.

WG will develop guidelines on:

3.1 **Guidelines on regular ear and hearing screening:**

These guidelines emphasize the need of "regular" ear and hearing screening. The regularity of the screening will depend on age, known ear / hearing problems, Down syndrome or not, hearing aid user or not.

These guidelines will be made for professionals, but will be adapted for guardians and politicians.

3.2 Guidelines on ear and hearing screening:

The way how to screen for ear and hearing problems will be described in these guidelines (where, by whom, which technology, ...).

3.3 Guidelines on ear and hearing assessment:

The way how to assess ear and hearing problems in this population will be described in these guidelines. How to adapt an existing assessment protocol for this population.

3.4 Guidelines on treatment, guidance, rehabilitation:

Topics like medical treatment, audiological treatment (including hearing aid fitting, ALDs, ...), multidisciplinary approach, ... will be discussed.

3.5 Guidelines for caregivers:

Guidelines on:

- Communication with people with ID and (known) hearing loss
- Detection of possible hearing loss in people with ID
- Hearing aid use and maintenance
- Sound environment

3.6 Guidelines for people with ID:

Guidelines about:

- Hearing aid use and maintenance
- Danger of noise

4. Other:

Other possible goals of the WG have been discussed. At this moment the WG will focus on the topics described above.

Members of Working Group:

The different members of the WG, based on the EFAS Board requirements, are:

- ANDERSSON Eva, Audiologist, Sweden
- CONINX Frans, Audiologist + Teacher of the Deaf, Germany
- CRAVO Melissa, Audiologist, Portugal
- GEORGESCU Madalina, ENT, Romania
- NEUMANN Katrin, ENT, Germany
- WILLEMS Melina, Audiologist (SLP/Deaf Interpreter), Belgium

Main contact person of the WG is Melina Willems (melina.willems@artevelddehs.be).