Applied Audiology

H.J.	Herbert J.	Oyer
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Guest Editor, Chair, Applied Audiology Committee, IALP, Columbus, Ohio, USA

Hearing is of great importance in learning speech and language and also of utmost importance in adjusting to the world of sound. Humans adjust to their environments by hearing the sounds of nature and music, alerting and warning, and those that emanate from the working world.

Recognizing the importance of hearing and the tremendous strides that have been made in the areas of measurement, diagnosis and intervention, the International Association of Logopedics and Phoni-atrics (IALP) invited its Applied Audiology Committee to prepare an issue devoted to these topics for publication in the Folia Phoniatrica et Logopaedica.

Initially, Deal and Haas discuss hearing and its relationship to the learning of speech and language. As they suggest, this learning occurs quite naturally as the child hears others speak. At the Cairo IALP Congress, Herer brought to our attention the importance of otoacoustic emissions as a diagnostic indicant in the newborn. Herer et al. describe their research in this area. Early detection provides opportunity for early intervention.

Pruszewicz and Sekula present a critical review of those factors that influence in a negative way the attempts at rehabilitation of hearing-impaired children.

Over the last several decades implants for severely hard-of-hearing persons have been developed. Thousands have profited from the surgical implantation of these devices. Proper selection of those patients who will profit from such implants is critical. Marangos and Laszig discuss cochlear and brainstem implants. The question is raised concerning the best time to provide hearing-impaired children with implants. The article by Ribari et al. deals with this question as it focuses upon cochlear implants in children.

Great strides have been made in recent years in the development of assistive listening devices for hearing-impaired persons. Caution in the coupling of these devices to hearing aids is reviewed by Davidson and Noe.

The hearing-impaired elderly have received particular attention by care providers, researchers, and the popular press. Stephens and Zhao discuss the variables involved in providing for the special needs of these older persons.

Some estimates indicate that there are over 200 million persons in the world with impaired hearing. It is imperative that those who have the information and skills assist in the task of identifying and treating children and adults with ear disease, and rehabilitating

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those who sustain irreversible hearing loss. Kapur and Oyer describe the extent of hearing loss in developing countries and share with the reader a proposal for training audiological assistants to help the medical community provide care. The proposal, developed by the Applied Audiology Committee of the IALP, has been adopted by two countries thus far.

Outstanding developments in the hearing aid and the new technologies now at hand make the future look bright. Kiessling sets forth in his article a look to the future and what we can expect of the exciting new developments that are on the horizon.

A special word of thanks is in order to Andre Muller, MD, a past president of IALP, for his translation of the abstracts; to Joseph H. Oyer, MD, FACS otolaryngologist, for his professional input; members of the Applied Audiology Committee, and to the authors who in the face of demanding schedules have given so liberally of their time, effort, and talents to make this issue possible.

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Folia Phoniatr Logop 1996;48:109-110

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