

Hearing Aid Fitting Clinic

26 June 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WizEar in conjunction with the National Healthcare Trust and the President's Fund conducted a hearing aid fitting clinic for underprivileged children and adults on the 26th June 2015. A total of 36 clients received hearing aids and hearing aid accessories at no cost.

The hearing aid fitting clinic was made possible through support from various partners including the National Healthcare Trust who provided funds for phase 1 clinics for the purpose of identifying potential hearing aid beneficiaries, conducting diagnostic audiological assessments, ear impression taking and processing of ear moulds. The President's Fund provided financial support to conduct ear and hearing healthcare clinics in all central and provincial hospitals and covered staff hiring costs. The Ministry of Health and Child Care, Department of Non Communicable Diseases played a crucial role in facilitating the ear and hearing healthcare clinics conducted across the country. Leonard Cheshire provided us with the venue for phase 1 clinics and supportive staff.

The hearing aid fitting clinic (Phase 2 clinic) was conducted at Audiomax Clinic and Audiomax Audiology and was cosponsored by NHTZ and WizEar. All hearing aids fitted during that clinic were provided at no cost by The Lions Club (UK), WizEar and Shaun Slaven (Hearing aid services Australia). Special thanks to the Audiologists, Nurses, Audiology Technicians and doctors who participated in the clinic.

All the 36 clients who received hearing aids were enrolled into the monthly hearing aid follow up clinic register and will benefit from comprehensive follow up including monthly over the phone follow ups and monthly drop in sessions conducted by fully qualified Audiologists. Hearing aid battery supply, replacement of lost accessories and hearing aids will be conducted during the follow up clinics. NHTZ continues to play a crucial role in the follow up of more than 250 hearing aid beneficiaries under our care by supporting the follow up clinics financially.

We are truly grateful for the support provided by all our partners. Hearing aid provision and continuous follow up has transformed the quality of life of the majority of our clients. A sizable proportion of children under our care have been re-integrated into mainstream classes as their hearing has been restored through the use of hearing aids. With your support we hope to scale up hearing aid provision to ensure that the vulnerable children and adults benefit maximally from services being rendered.

The next hearing aid fitting clinic will be conducted on the 15th September 2015.

Many thanks



Programme Director, WizEar Trust ~ Dr J Matsekete

Background

Hearing impairment, defined as deviation from normal hearing ranges from mild to profound hearing loss^{1; 7}. Hearing impairment is a silent, progressive condition whose consequences are devastating in the absence of early and timely intervention. Hearing loss in children results in failure to attain the spoken language, literacy and numeracy skills leading to poor educational performance and limited vocational prospects^{3;4}. In addition, children with hearing impairment are prone to physical and sexual abuse, stigma and discrimination^{4; 6; 9}.

An estimated 360 million people live with hearing disability globally of which 44% of all cases are women and 9% are children less than 15 years. According to The World Health Organization's (WHO) statistics hearing disability in Zimbabwe ranges from 4-6% of the general population. This means that approximately 520 000 to 780 000 people live with hearing disability in Zimbabwe^{8; 11; 12}. The estimates by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare are an underestimate of the actual burden of hearing impairment by a factor of 20 and this has been attributed to lack of clear definitions of what constitutes hearing disability in the country, poor methodologies for existing surveys and social isolation which leads to under reporting of cases⁶. According to surveys done in Manicaland Province, hearing loss ranged between 2.2-2.8% among school children. It is estimated that 50% of all cases of hearing disability globally are avoidable¹³

Problem Statement

The WHO estimates that 20% of all people living with hearing impairment require hearing assistive devices however only 3% of these have access to these devices. While it's the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Child Care and the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare to provide hearing assistive devices, these ministries lack the capacity and resources to provide hearing aids in the public sector. In addition, while there are hearing aid providers in the private sector, hearing assistive devices and the associated hearing aid accessories come to a huge cost ranging from USD\$ 600 to USD\$ 1500 per hearing aid. This cost is beyond the reach of the majority of the Zimbabwean population. As a result of the lack of hearing healthcare services, hearing impaired children and adults have often gone without the much needed hearing aids.

Closing the gap



As WizEar we have embarked on an ambitious programme to try and close the disparity in access to hearing healthcare services between the affluent and the poor by supporting the underprivileged with affordable hearing aids of good quality. With support from various stakeholders both local and international we have managed to reach out to more than 250 clients requiring hearing aids over the past 9 months. In addition we have been able to provide comprehensive follow up of all beneficiaries through over the phone follow ups and monthly clinics. We are looking forward to expand our services to all Provincial Hospitals in Zimbabwe.

The hearing aid clinic

A total of 41 clients (24 Female, 17 Male) were identified during phase 1 clinics and had diagnostic audiological assessments and ear impression taking. 17 clients were under the age of 18 (12 Female, 5 Male). These clients were then pre booked for a hearing aid fitting clinic on the 26th June 2015.

A total of 36 out of 41 clients (88%) attended for hearing aid fitting on the 26th June. The remaining 5 clients could not attend citing lack of bus fares and school exams as reasons for non attendance. Of those who attended 22 clients were female and 14 were male. 15 clients were less than 18 years of age (10 female, 5 Male).

All clients received hearing aids and hearing aid accessories at no cost.



Client success stories

Client X, 10 Years



"Client X had hearing impairment since the age of 2 years. He is now 10 years of age. He had challenges in class due to hearing impairment and had to sit close to the teacher in order to hear. I had to shout even when he is close to me because of his poor hearing. He was being stigmatised and isolated at school because of the hearing problem.

*I am grateful that he can now hear properly thanks to the support from WizEar." **By client's mother***

Client Y



*"Client Y (Blue jacket) has had hearing impairment since the age of 5 years. He has had recurrent ear infections for which he received medical attention from various practitioners without any improvement. He sometimes had to miss school because of the ear infections. He faced challenges in class and had to sit close to the teacher because of his hearing problem. We then heard about WizEar this year (2015). I want to thank God that my son can now hear properly." **Client's mother***

Client Z



Mr Z: "I have had hearing impairment for over a decade now. I had challenges communicating both at work and at home because of the hearing problem. I declined the opportunity of becoming a manager at work because of my hearing problem. Even though I knew that I required hearing aids, the cost was way beyond my means.

I am truly thankful for your support, continue the good work"

Mr Z with Ms Nightingale (President's Fund); D. Mugugu (NHTZ); MK Sibanda (Audiologist, Audiomax Audiology) and Dr Matsekete (Director, WizEar)



Client receiving hearing aid counselling



Client P, 13 Years



“Client P is 13 years old. He is still in Grade 4 but was supposed to be in Grade 7. He was delayed because of hearing impairment. I had to speak with a loud voice for him to hear. He can now hear properly with support from the hearing aids and I am planning to take him into the mainstream class as his hearing has improved significantly.” **School Teacher, Chirodzero Primary School**

Client undergoing hearing aid fitting



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