UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING WITH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT: A PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC APPROACH

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The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of adults with congenital profound and post-lingual deafness following a psychotherapeutic approach in order to create a better understanding and living with a cochlear implant.
OBJECTIVES

To provide and made psychiatrists, psychologists, clinicians, cochlear implant recipients, parents, family and other health care providers aware with a current consensus on the emotions, expectations, outcomes, benefits, risks, limitations, ethical and technical issues considered in cochlear implants.
METHODS

• Six congenital and 4 post-lingual deafened cochlear implant (CI) recipients who had received their implants as adults were interviewed using a semi-structured interview technique.
• Age: between 23 – 60 years with unilateral CI
• CI device experience at least between 2 – 5 > years
• Interviews were conducted in the participants preferred communication mode.
• Auditory-verbal/oral, cued speech, total communication or Sign Language
METHODS

Three critical aspects are of cardinal importance:

• Firstly in terms of enthusiasm, motivation and motives for seeking the implant.
• Secondly is informed consent, which subsumes knowledge and an understanding of “reasonable expectations”.
• Thirdly, candidates need to be informed of the potential risks and benefits of cochlear implantation and the psychological impact it may have on their life.
METHODS

• Limited data available prior to the study from which to develop hypothesis to test
• Analysis was carried out using grounded theory
• Build up new theories rather than having to apply a pre-existing theory
• The “Feeling Wheel,” which was developed by Dr. Gloria Willcox was use as a framework to design the questionnaire. It is very useful in identifying the specific feelings and emotions experiencing at any given point in time so that they can be addressed and resolved.
The Feeling Wheel is designed to aid people in learning to recognize and communicate about their feelings. It consists of an inner circle with 6 sectors and two outer concentric circles. The sectors are each labeled with the name of a primary feeling, viz., mad, sad, scared, joyful, powerful, and peaceful. The outer rings contain names of secondary feelings related to the primary ones. The wheel has proven useful in assisting clients to learn how to identify, to express, to generate, and to change feelings.
METHODS

The outer rings contain names of secondary feelings related to the primary ones.

RESULTS

- Profound before CI
- Post-lingual before CI
- Profound after CI
- Post-lingual after CI

Graph showing the distribution of emotions before and after cochlear implantation.
## PROFOUND BEFORE AND AFTER CI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Break the silence; hear birds; hearing kids, own choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations &amp; Outcomes</td>
<td>It takes years to become fully adjusted to the sounds. I much prefer my natural language of sign language because it ensures 100% communication, rather than constantly questioning myself if I heard something correctly. The first time my CI was turned on did not result in being able to understand sounds and speech completely, Instead, my first sounds were beeps, which gave me constant headaches - it took well over 10 years for me to be able to identify different sounds and speech. The sound of a bumble bee close up in all its CI clarity is breathtakingly scary and beautiful all at the same time!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>At first angry, disappointed, confused, scared, happy, joyful, overwhelmed, frustrated, anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Confidence, powerful, better job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>Switched-on day worst experience, high rehabilitation costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## POST-LINGUAL BEFORE & AFTER CI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>To better hear or to hear again</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations &amp; Outcomes</td>
<td>Excited going to listen to everyone and everything. Completely deaf without CI. With the CI, hear almost everything ... even the humming of the air conditioning. High expectations. Improvement each time after mapping. Help with lip-reading. Less isolated, lonely, stressed and depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Thankful, grateful, joyful, happy, amused, relaxed, proud, surprised, excitement, exhausting, hopeful, content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Speaks over the phone. Communication, participation, integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>Headaches, speech and music not natural like before, tinnitus, rehabilitation and maintenance costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

• Contradictions between profound and post-lingual
• Various and different emotions experienced
• A personal journey
• Increases emotional well-being
• Reduces emotional distress – long term
• Promote communication
• Less dependence on hearing people
• Risks – like every operation
• Difficult to predict outcomes
• All have experience some or meaningful sound & speech benefits
CONCLUSION

• Not a “cure” for deafness
• Effective intervention
• Many factors; onset, cause, period with CI, political, economic, social, technology, personality, environment
• Different emotional outcomes – negative, positive, both
• Psychiatrists & psychologists need expertise, knowledge, understanding & different modes of communication
• Medical ethical aspects
• Before & after CI – psychotherapy needed
WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE

- MAGTELD SMITH
Thank You
Dankie

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