

Stakeholders' views of hearing healthcare: Barriers and facilitators to cochlear implantation

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Introduction

Cochlear implants (CIs) are recommended as the international standard of care for adults with severe-profound bilateral hearing loss.¹ Despite this, globally, most eligible adults do not receive one. The reasons for this are not yet well understood.

Aims

- To explore stakeholder experiences of CI care pathways
- To identify perceived barriers and facilitators to cochlear implantation
- To explore healthcare professional (HCP) and patient views about CIs

Methods

Multi-phase, qualitative mixed-method study conducted in Australia and the UK. Adult CI users (n = 17) and HA users (n = 9) aged 50 years+, GPs (n = 7), audiologists (n = 11) were recruited using purposive timeframe sampling.

Verbatim transcripts of interviews and focus groups, demographic questionnaires, and surveys were analysed using thematic and schema analyses.

Patients require information and counselling around cochlear implantation at **multiple timepoints** in their CI journey. However, **information access** was a perceived barrier for both patients and hearing healthcare practitioners.



Results

Barriers to CI included: 1) patient concerns about surgery; loss of residual hearing; and time off work; 2) lack of communication by HCPs; and 3) Limited HCP knowledge.

Facilitators included: 1) patients' desire for improved communication and quality of life; 2) good HCP support; 3) positive CI testimonials; 4) access to high quality information.

Conclusions and recommendations

This qualitative study identified numerous barriers and facilitators to CI. Further research to determine how existing pathways and resources address identified barriers is needed to inform the development and implementation of solutions to improve uptake of CI in eligible, older adults.

References

¹ Buchman et al. (2020). *JAMA Otolaryngology-- Head & Neck Surgery*. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoto.2020.0998>