



Abstract

## Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

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Studies have shown that 1 to 5 out of 1000 newborns who are not at risk but found to have hearing loss. Studies have also shown that the initial age where a child being first detected to have hearing loss is between 24 to 48 month because being a hidden handicap, hearing loss is easily missed during the early months of life. In order for a normal development of speech and language to take place, exposure to sounds and voices need to start as early as newborn. When this does not take place, there can be a significant delay in language and learning, resulting a child to be likely facing more social, educational and vocational challenges throughout his/her life.

One way to provide early hearing detection and intervention is through universal newborn hearing screening. In Malaysia, although there is a rise of awareness on the needs for early hearing detection and intervention, very few hospitals are actively offering the screening program. It is important to note that when implementing such program, there are many pertinent issues related to the implementation, intervention and maintenance of the program that should not be disregarded. A program coordinator or manager should be appointed so that these issues can be deeply analyzed before the program is implemented.

Considering many factors like the high volumes of birth and highly-engaged doctors, mainly Obstetricians & Gynecologists and Paediatricians, nurses and other supporting staff at the delivery ward and baby nursery especially in the government-based hospitals, the audiologist should be considered to become the program coordinator/manager.

Audiologist is the hearing health care professional or expert in the non-medical management of the auditory and balance systems, specializing in the prevention, identification and assessment of hearing loss and other related disabilities (like balance disorders) as well treatment and (re)habilitative services.