

The mental health of deaf adolescents with cochlear implants compared to their hearing peers

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Abstract

Objective: To measure the mental health status of deaf adolescents with cochlear implants (CI).

STUDY SAMPLE AND DESIGN: We used the "Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire" (SDQ) to assess the mental health problems of 32 adolescents with CI (mean age 15.0 years) and 212 normal hearing peers (mean age 15.0 years).

Results: Parent and teacher ratings for the CI subjects (ES emotional symptoms, HA inattention-hyperactivity, CP conduct-problems and PBS pro-social behavior) did not differ significantly from the results of normal hearing peers. However, teachers rated significantly more cases as having peer problems (PP) and more cases as having very high (clinical) total difficulty scores (TDS) in the CI group. The SDQ results of the CI users correlated significantly with poor results in auditory performance and special school education. The age at CI implantation was not found to be a correlated with emotional, behavioral and social problems.

Conclusions: Our findings indicate that the mental health of deaf adolescents with CI is comparable to that of normal hearing peers.