



National Institute for Health Research

Nottingham Hearing Biomedical Research Unit

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Information Sheet

Study title: The accuracy of hearing tests and cost-effectiveness of school entry hearing screening programmes

Name of Researcher(s): Dr Heather Fortnum, Ms Sam Catterick and Ms Mara Ozolins

Invitation

We would like to invite your child to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you agree to their participation it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. If you would like, one of our team will go through the information sheet with you and answer any questions you have. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

Identifying children who have a permanent hearing loss at the earliest possible age is very important. When a hearing loss is detected early, the child's speech and language is usually better and they do better in school. There is now a hearing test at birth for all babies and this means that the vast majority of children born with a hearing loss are identified at birth. However, not all children who will eventually have a hearing loss have that hearing loss at birth.

In most parts of the UK at the moment children have another hearing test when they start school to screen for permanent hearing loss. However, this might not be the best test to use. A new system using a hand-held device to test hearing might be more accurate, and quicker and easier for the children and the school nurses who do the testing.

One aim of this project is to compare the current test with this new way of testing hearing in schools and find out which one is better able to identify hearing loss in children.

What will happen to my child if they take part?

Your child's hearing will be tested with the system currently used in schools, regardless of whether or not your child takes part in the research. As part of the research we would also like to test your child's hearing with a new handheld device. Each hearing test gives out sounds at levels up to the equivalent of a noisy room and your child will need to say when they hear a sound. Each ear will be tested separately. The first system plays the sounds via headphones and the new system plays the sounds from a small device held next to the child's ear. Your child tells the school nurse when they hear something by raising their hand.

The school nurse will carry out each of the tests in your child's school during the normal school day. A member of the research team will observe the tests and record how long it takes and other general observations about the two tests.

Why has my child been chosen?

Your child is being invited to take part because they have recently started school and are eligible to have a routine hearing test.

Does my child have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not he or she takes part. If you do decide that your child will take part, you don't need to do anything. If you decide that he/she should not take part, please return the reply slip on the invitation letter and return it to the school nurse at your child's school.

What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

There should be no risk or discomfort for your child. The loudest sound that they will listen to is approximately the equivalent of a noisy room.

What are the advantages of taking part?

We cannot promise the study will help your child but the information we get from this study may help to decide how best to detect hearing loss in children in the future.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. The researchers' contact details are given at the end of this information sheet.

Will information about my child be kept confidential?

We will not collect any information about your child in this piece of research, as we are interested only in the methods used to test hearing and not your child's personal details.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will be written up into a report for the National Institute for Health Research who are funding the study. We will also publish the results in academic journals and present the results at academic and clinical conferences. The results will feed into government decisions about the best way to screen for hearing loss in children.

Who are the researchers?

The research is being led by Dr Heather Fortnum, an Associate Professor and Reader in Hearing Research at the University of Nottingham. She is working with two research fellows, Sam Catterick and Mara Ozolins who will see the children in this study.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being organised by the University of Nottingham and is being funded by the National Institute for Health Research, Health Technology Assessment Programme

Who has reviewed this study?

All research in the NHS is looked at by independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect participant's interests. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by West Midlands, Staffordshire Research Ethics Committee.

Further information and contact details

The chief investigator for this study is Dr Heather Fortnum, telephone 0115 8232600 or email heather.fortnum@nottingham.ac.uk. The two researchers working on the study are Sam Catterick, telephone 0115 8232607, email samantha.catterick@nottingham.ac.uk and Mara Ozolins, telephone 0115 8232827, email mara.ozolins@nottingham.ac.uk.

Thank you for reading this