

WHO programme for ear and hearing care
in collaboration with
National Research Centre for Audiology and Hearing Rehabilitation

Multi-country Workshop on Ear and Hearing Care in the European Region



**Moscow, Russian Federation
16-17 October 2018**

Meeting report

BACKGROUND

WHO Geneva, WHO Regional Office for Europe and WHO Country Office in the Russian Federation in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Center in Moscow - National Research Centre for Audiology and Hearing Rehabilitation - joined forces in organizing the multi-country workshop on ear and hearing care for 15 countries of the European Region on 16-17 October 2018 in the Russian capital. The meeting was aimed at promoting actions for the implementation of the World Health Assembly resolution 70.13 (WHA70.13) on prevention of deafness and hearing loss, adopted in 2017.

466 million people in the world live with disabling hearing loss, including 34 million children. Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia contribute nearly 7.5% of the overall prevalence, which in these countries is almost twice as high as in Western European countries. It is expected that the prevalence of hearing loss will rise considerably in coming decades due to changing population demographics, increasing exposure to risk factors such as noise, as well as persistence of untreated ear conditions such as otitis media. Many of the causes that lead to hearing loss are preventable. Among older adults, above the age of 65 years, nearly one in three experience disabling hearing loss. Unaddressed hearing loss is the leading cause of morbidity and poses an annual cost of \$750 billion globally.

In children, 60% of hearing loss can be prevented through public health strategies. Those who have hearing loss can greatly benefit from timely and appropriate interventions. Effective implementation of proven strategies to prevent hearing loss and rehabilitation of those with irreversible impairments require a number of public health measures to be put in place, including the integration of high quality, comprehensive ear and hearing care services into national health systems. Hearing loss can often be managed medically, surgically or through other means, for example hearing aids, assistive devices and cochlear implants. Currently, hearing aid production meets less than 10% of global need. In developing countries, fewer than 1 out of 40 people who need a hearing aid have one.

Hearing care and hearing loss as a public health issue were highlighted at the WHA in 2017, with the adoption of the resolution on prevention of deafness and hearing loss. This resolution calls upon WHO and its Member States to develop public health strategies to make ear and hearing care accessible for all. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, addressing hearing loss through accessible ear and hearing care is essential to achieve Goal 3, which calls on all stakeholders to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages".

Improving ear and hearing care will also contribute significantly towards WHO's 13th Global Programme of Work. This will significantly contribute to the goal of achieving universal health coverage and to the goal of 1 billion people enjoying better health and well-being by 2023.

The meeting provided WHO an opportunity to share the current work done in the field of ear and hearing care. The meeting also served to improve the understanding of the need and perspectives of this region in order to define a shared vision for global action on hearing loss. In this context, the overall objectives of the workshop were:

Main objectives

- To sensitize Member States and partners to the WHA resolution 70.13 on prevention of deafness and hearing loss.
- To assess the current situation of ear and hearing care activities in selected countries of the European region and share best practices.
- To provide information on available WHO tools and recommendations for integration of Ear and Hearing Care (EHC) into health systems.
- To get feedback on the draft outline of the World Report of Hearing.

The meeting was attended by 37 participants from 17 countries, including representatives of Member States, otolaryngologists, audiologists, public health experts, representatives of international and regional professional organizations, INGOs involved in ear and hearing care, civil society groups, WHO collaborating center, private sector, research institutions, researchers, WHO regional adviser for ear and hearing care.

The format of the meeting was a two-day workshop consisting of plenary sessions, country status presentations, a round table and group work.

The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are attached as Annex 1 and 2 of this report.

DISCUSSIONS CENTERED AROUND

- **WHO actions, initiatives and tools in the field of ear and hearing care:** all participants were made aware of the WHA resolution 70.13 on prevention of deafness and hearing loss as well as existing WHO activities and resources, with the aim to further their implementation in countries.
- **Current status of ear and hearing care in the region:** all participating countries presented their ongoing actions as well as challenges and future plans for ear and hearing care. Priorities in the region were discussed and relevant actions required to identify these priorities were identified.

- **The World Report on Hearing**, which is to be launched by WHO in March 2020 was outlined and feedback sought from participants. Discussions centered around the use of this report to drive action for EHC in the region.
- **The World Hearing Forum** was introduced and ideas gained regarding the global advocacy initiative to be launched by the Forum. A discussion was held with the WHO Representative and Director of the National Research Centre for Audiology and Hearing Rehabilitation (NRCAHR) regarding next steps for promotion of hearing care in the Russian Federation.

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

- Raising awareness with policymakers and within communities as a means of prioritization of hearing care. The World Hearing Day provides a good opportunity in this respect.
- Formation of a multi-stakeholder national committee and having a dedicated focal point in countries was identified as a key step in developing hearing care. The committee must be led by the government and have representation of health care professionals including otolaryngologists doctors and audiologists; teachers; persons with hearing loss; parent groups, other civil society groups and industry. Along with this, it is important to designate a centre for action on hearing loss.
- Need to establish screening and early intervention programmes for hearing loss, especially in newborns, infants and school children.
- Prevention of hearing loss through noise reduction practices and other means.
- A unified approach towards procurement of hearing devices (hearing aids and cochlear implants) could strengthen relations and limit costs.
- Linkages with highly developed countries for development of surgical and audiological skills.
- Identification of and engagement with leaders/role models within the hard of hearing/Deaf community.
- It is important to build a strong evidence-base through data collection using WHO tools.

NEXT STEPS

- Information presented by countries during the workshop will be further analyzed. It will be used by WHO for the World Report on Hearing
- It is proposed that a regional launch of the World Report be organized.
 - Such a launch will be an opportunity to engage with political stakeholders and could be a combination of a political event followed by a technical meeting.
 - One or more regional ambassadors should be involved. An Ambassador could be a celebrity, or someone with a powerful story and message to convey.
 - The regional launch should ideally be accompanied or followed by a policy dialogue.
- Participants attending the meeting on behalf of their governments will initiate dialogue with the governments to highlight the need for hearing care and sensitize them to available WHO tools and resources.
- WHO will share a summary version of the WHA resolution and key facts to assist Member States and partners.
- World Hearing Day would be observed by all participants, in line with the annual theme proposed by WHO.

Multi-country workshop on ear and hearing care in the European region

Golden Ring Hotel
Moscow, Russian Federation.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday 16 October 2018											
Time	Session										
8:30	Registration										
9:00	<p>Welcome, introductions and opening remarks</p> <p>Objectives and outline</p> <p>Melita Vujnovic, WHO Representative to the Russian Federation</p> <p>Professor George Tavartkiladze, National Research Centre for Audiology and Hearing Rehabilitation</p>										
09:30	<p>Ear and hearing care: regional perspective</p> <p>Dr Manfred Huber, WHO</p>										
09:50	<p>Ear and hearing care: global perspective</p> <p>Dr Shelly Chadha, WHO</p>										
10.15	Tea/coffee break										
10:45	<p>Country presentations: Ear and hearing care status</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Armenia</td> <td>Kyrgyzstan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belarus</td> <td>Latvia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Georgia</td> <td>Republic of Moldova</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poland</td> <td>Romania</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kazakhstan</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Armenia	Kyrgyzstan	Belarus	Latvia	Georgia	Republic of Moldova	Poland	Romania	Kazakhstan	
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12:30	Lunch										
13:30	<p>Country presentations: Ear and hearing care status</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Russia</td> <td>Turkmenistan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slovakia</td> <td>Ukraine</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tajikistan</td> <td>Uzbekistan</td> </tr> </table>	Russia	Turkmenistan	Slovakia	Ukraine	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan				
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14:45	<p>Introduction to group work on Identifying regional priorities</p> <p>Dr Shelly Chadha</p>										
14:50	Tea/coffee break										
15:15	Group work on Identifying regional priorities										
16:30	Presentation of group work and discussion										
17:30	Wrap up										

Day 2: Wednesday 17 October 2018

Time	Session
8:30	Recaps from Day 1
9:00	Introduction to tools WHO tools for EHC Dr. Shelly Chadha, WHO Resources for safe listening Dr. Karen Reyes, WHO Discussion
10:00	<i>Tea/coffee break with market place on hearing</i>
10:30	Spend2save: a European initiative Sue Archbold, European Association of Cochlear Implants
10:45	Role of civil society groups in EHC Ms Darja Paj, European Federation of Hard of Hearing
11:00	Advocacy using the World Hearing Day Ekaterine Tortladze, Aures Foundation
11:15	Discussion
11:30	World Report on Hearing Purpose, structure and preparation Dr Shelly Chadha, Dr Karen Reyes, WHO
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30	Introduction to the World Hearing Forum Professor George Tavartkiladze , National Research Centre for Audiology and Hearing Rehabilitation
14:15	Introduction to group work on regional and country actions for ear and hearing care
14:20	Group work on regional actions for ear and hearing care
15:30	<i>Tea/coffee break</i>
16:00	Group work on country actions
16:30	Presentation of group work and discussion
17:30	Next steps and wrap up
18:00	Meeting close





Multi-country workshop on ear and hearing care in the European region
Moscow, Russian Federation, 16-17 October 2018

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