

Intensive rehabilitation programmes for deafened men and women: an evaluation study

During the period 1995 to 1997, with support from the Department of Health, Hearing Link (formerly the LINK Centre for Deafened People) undertook a project to evaluate the immediate and long-term impact of attending the Intensive Rehabilitation Programme.

For full details see: Sherbourne, K., White, L., Fortnum, H. (2002) *Intensive rehabilitation programmes for deafened men and women: an evaluation study*. International Journal of Audiology 41: 195-201

The methodology was closely modelled on the national Cochlear Implant Evaluation Study (1995) using questionnaires to elicit self-assessment in a number of areas. All the questionnaires were published tests which have been standardised elsewhere.

The Study was based on data from 71 deafened respondents (29 male, 42 female) who attended the programme between April 1995 and September 1997. Data sets were gathered at three points in time: immediately prior to attending the programme, one month after, and six months later.

The following measures show highly statistically significant improvements both one month and six months after the programme, demonstrating that the programme causes marked benefits which last for at least six months:

Psychological state A number of measures were used to detect changes in psychological adjustment to deafness. These included:

- **Depression** Depression levels showed a marked decrease. The number of subjects who were clinically depressed was 61% prior to attendance, 40% after one month, and 31% after six months.
- **Mental health** Scores indicated that subjects' state of mental health which included measures of anxiety levels and outlook, improved.
- **Emotional state** The extent to which emotional problems interfered with work or other daily activities decreased.
- **Fatigue** Feelings of tiredness and fatigue attributable to coping with deafness were reduced.

State of health Two measures were used to assess subjects' state of health. The first showed improvements in well-being and independence, and the second, measuring current health, health outlook and evaluation of health demonstrated statistically significant improvements one month after the programme.

Quality of life Subjects reported an improvement in quality of life as measured by levels of self-confidence and ability to maintain personal and social relationships.

Communication effectiveness The extent to which hearing loss had a limiting effect on subjects' ability to communicate and negatively affected social confidence or caused problems within the family, decreased. This implied improved communication effectiveness.

Social functioning The extent to which physical or emotional problems interfered with normal social activities decreased.