



ESPO



Hearing tests: remaining indications

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Background

- Newborn Hearing Screening and Early Intervention should be continued during the novel Coronavirus pandemic
- The timeframe from birth to starting habilitation is short and all efforts should be made to respect the guidelines (screening until 1 month of age - diagnosis completed until 3 months of age – habilitation started before 6 months of age)

1-3-6



- Well babies should be screened before leaving the maternity
- NUCI babies should be screened before discharge from hospital
- Babies who refer in one or both ears should proceed to immediate aABR (before discharge), whenever possible, to lower the false positive rate



Coordination with Pediatric Department:

- Babies that miss screening, are born at home or need a second stage test, should be scheduled the same day for hearing screening, newborn blood spot , vaccination and first visit to the pediatrician, to lessen the exposure to the virus



- Families that want to postpone the hearing screening should be noticed later on by the Audiology unit (that should retain the contact for later appointment)
- **No children should be left behind nor be late identified**



Health & safety issues

- Audiologists must be instructed to act according to the policies of the institution, namely using PPE1 protection
- Equipment should be cleaned between tests
- Probes and electrodes should be discharged
- If the mother or the child is Covid 19 + the screening should be postponed unless it is a clinical urgency, and then increased level of protection should be considered



Clinically urgent referrals

- Bacterial meningitis (risk of cochlear fibrosis/calcification)
- Test referrals (OEA or aABR) in suspected congenital CMV infection (urgent anti-virus medical treatment)



If the outpatient Audiology services have been suspended during the pandemic, once services resume infants should be tested by order of priority:

- NICU Babies bilateral referrals
- Well babies bilateral referrals
- Unilateral referrals
- Targeted Screening follow-up



- Behaviour tests (for older children) represent a challenge regarding safety issues:
- The both usually have rough surfaces that cannot be disinfected
- Small children are not complaint with using a mask during the test
- Toys used during the audiogram should be cleaned between tests