FOCAS: Family Oriented Communication Assessment and Solutions

A new holistic tool for performing hearing needs assessments

2. Background

- Hearing loss is a shared disability. And emerging research shows the importance of, preference for, and better outcomes with family involvement in the journey to better hearing (e.g., Poost-Faraz et al., 2015; Myer et al., 2015; Raith et al., 2013; Halleux, 2015).
- Research also shows a positive link between client satisfaction and the number of listening situations (near- and far-field) their hearing solutions deliver benefit (Kochkin, 2007).
- Yet there is currently no single communication assessment tool (CAT) that considers both the family and specific exploration of near-field and far-field hearing needs.

3. Methods

- We surveyed 75 hearing healthcare professionals (HCPs) from 5 countries (NZ, AUS, UK, Singapore, and Canada) to explore how they perform a communication needs assessment and to see if there was an opportunity for an improved CAT.
- The survey was split into three main areas: (i) Use of currently available tools, (ii) Consideration of near- and far-field hearing and (iii) Involvement of the family.

4. Results

4.1 Survey

(i) Use of currently available tools

- Only ~60% of respondents (either always or mostly) use a formal tool (Fig 2.1.1).

(ii) Consideration of near- and far-field hearing

- Around 60% of HCPs indicated they do not regularly (i.e., either always or mostly) use a formal tool to actively involve the family.
- Only 25% of HCPs reported a family member being present either often or almost always in appointments. This is consistent with Meyer et al. (2015), who interviewed a number of clinicians in Australia and found that family attended appointments only about 30% of the time.
- And the vast majority of respondents are interested in a tool that helps to involve family in a more structured way (see Fig 2.3.1).

4.2 - Development of the FOCAS Tool

- Gaps we saw in the currently available CATs as well as insights gained from the survey helped us to develop the FOCAS (see Fig 2.2.1).
- Specifically, the FOCAS is a single, clinical tool that:
  - Integrates family centred care (FCC) so that clients and their families develop shared goals, are fully informed of the various rehabilitation options available and are central in deciding which is best for them.
  - Explores the emotive impact of hearing loss
  - Considers holistic hearing needs, including both near- and far-field situations.
- Because language was noted by several survey respondents as an area for improvement, an additional goal was to translate FOCAS into several languages to promote hearing needs assessments within the hearing profession globally.

5. Conclusions

- Our survey results indicated the need for a CAT that actively encourages input from family as well as exploration of both near- and far-field needs. Additionally, the need for a tool in multiple languages was also highlighted.
- We developed the FOCAS to address these needs, and in this poster describe this tool in detail.
- Feedback from initial pilot sites is extremely encouraging and we are looking to roll out a formal validation study in the near future. If you would like to be involved, please contact the authors:
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