



EAR AND HEARING CARE

SITUATION ANALYSIS TOOL



World Health
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DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITUATION ANALYSIS TOOL

This tool is the outcome of a consultative process. The relevance of situation analysis as an important step in the development of a national ear and hearing care strategy was established by the WHO Ad hoc Consultation on Promotion of Ear and Hearing Care in Member States, at a meeting at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 1–2 April 2015. The outline of the situation analysis tool was agreed during this meeting. On the basis of these discussions and a review of other situation analysis tools, an outline of the structure and contents was developed by WHO. A working group was then set up to review the draft at a meeting on 1–2 July. The revised draft went through two more rounds of revision by the working group, and was also reviewed by the WHO regional offices. It then underwent field evaluation in Egypt, Fiji, India, Kenya and New Zealand. On the basis of the inputs and comments received from the reviewers, the tool was once again modified and reviewed within WHO.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Millions of people in the world live with disabling hearing loss that could have been prevented or effectively managed through effective ear and hearing care. Many conditions that lead to hearing loss can be prevented, for example otitis media, exposure to excessive noise, trauma, exposure to ototoxic substances, and infections such as meningitis, measles, mumps and rubella. Many people with hearing loss can be supported through early identification and appropriate interventions.

Ear and hearing care refers to comprehensive, evidence-based interventions to prevent, identify and treat ear diseases and hearing loss, and to rehabilitate and support persons with hearing loss. In order to provide such services, countries must have a strategic plan that takes into account the demographic profile, requirements and resources.

The first step in the development of such a strategy is an assessment of the situation in the country regarding ear and hearing care. This step is crucial to an understanding of the epidemiology of hearing loss and the status of the systems supporting ear and hearing care, including the available human resources, infrastructure and services. It allows needs to be assessed and the gap between the current situation and the ideal one to be defined. An understanding of the existing health system and of the programmes that can potentially intersect with hearing care will provide important background for the development of a strategy. Stakeholder analysis is a key component of setting up a collaborative and cohesive work plan.

The situation analysis tool facilitates this first step of planning for ear and hearing care. It is intended to help attain the following objectives:

- to assess the available direct and indirect policies, services and human resources related to ear and hearing care;
- to describe the framework and functioning of the health care system in the country, in the context of ear and hearing care;
- to assess the need for ear and hearing care services;
- to identify opportunities for promoting and sustaining integrated ear and hearing care along the continuum of care,¹ at all levels of the health system.

The situation analysis tool is primarily intended for use at national and subnational levels² by ear and hearing care planners, ear and hearing care health professionals and policy-makers, as well as by the international and domestic stakeholders working with them. The tool supports the compilation of information that can be used for advocacy, for development of a new strategy or updating of existing strategic plans for ear and hearing care. It facilitates the review of ear and hearing care services, to highlight the gaps and needs for service provision. The results can inform evidence-based decision-making, ensuring efficient use of available resources.

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