

PREVALENCE AND FACTORS RELATED TO HEARING IMPAIRMENT AMONG MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RURAL SOUTHERN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Background and objective:

Hearing impairment among children is a momentous health problem which has adverse consequences on their functional development and academic performance. In this context the present study was conducted to determine the prevalence and factors related to hearing impairment among primary school children in rural Kerala, India.

Materials and methods: 1160 children between 5-10 years were subjected to otoscopy and tuning fork testing. Children with abnormal tuning fork test results were further evaluated by pure tone audiometry and tympanometry.

Results:

The prevalence of hearing impairment was 8.10%. The mean value of hearing loss was 32.36dB with a standard deviation of 8.95dB. Permanent and possibly progressive sensorineural type of hearing loss was detected in 4.3% of cases, whereas treatable conductive type hearing loss was in 95.7% of cases.

Conclusions:

Majority of the aetiological factors of hearing impairment identified were preventable or treatable. This highlights the relevance and requirement of effective school screening programmes for eliminating these preventable cases of deafness from our community, as there is no such well-established programme in the country.

Keywords: [cerumen](#), [child health](#), [hearing loss](#), [otitis media with effusion](#), [prevalence](#), [suppurative otitis media](#).