

Title: Mass fitting of Hearing Aids: Kenyan Experience with the Starkey 3 phase community based hearing health care model

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Abstract:

Background: According to WHO, the current production of hearing aids is only 10 % of the global requirements. Furthermore, of the 10 % hearing Aids produced annually, only a quarter reach the low-income countries where the need is greatest. There are various barriers to the supply of hearing aids in developing countries. Chief among these is availability of affordable hearing aids. Most of the hearing aids distributed in low-income countries are availed through non-governmental and charitable organizations . There has been concern on whether the models of distribution adopted by such organizations sacrifice quality for quantity and whether they are sustainable. We present our experience with the Starkey Hearing Foundation 3 phase model of hearing aid fitting in Kenya

Objective: To review the effectiveness of the 3 phase community based hearing aid fitting model of the Starkey hearing foundation in Kenya

Subjects and method: Records of 4378 recipients of 8212 hearing aids in 2014 were analyzed with regard to age, sex, mode of aftercare, satisfaction level and post fitting problems

Results. There were 53.7% male and 46.35 females with the commonest age being between 5 and 17 years. Most of the recipients (67%) were contact by phone while 24.8 % were seen in schools for the aftercare. The main after care intervention was counseling in 26.7%, ear mold issues 5.3 % and power changes 2,5%. 55.2 % of the recipients reported no problem during the aftercare contact.

Conclusion: The 3 phase community based hearing health care model recently developed by the Starkey Hearing Foundation ensures that after mass fitting of hearing aids, the aftercare optimizes the impact of the fitted hearing aids by providing continuous interaction between the recipients and community based trained hearing health personnel.