

# Sound Matters

Issue №5 • May 2012

Northern Cochlear Implant Programme

## Introducing Caroline Selvaratnan, Kate Jepsen, and Ruth Lin Audiologists



### Caroline Selvaratnan

Caroline joined the University of Auckland in January 2012. She is working as the Professional Leader for the Hearing and Tinnitus clinic and the focus of her clinical work is with the adult cochlear implant programme. Caroline joins the University of Auckland Hearing & Tinnitus Clinic with 15 years' adult and paediatric diagnostic and rehabilitative work. Caroline also has significant experience with cochlear implants and will be working with the programme's other CI clinicians: Ellen Giles (Rehabilitationist) and Gayle Watson (Hearing Therapist).



### Kate Jepsen

Kate joined The Hearing House team as an Audiologist in October 2011. She works on Wednesdays and Thursdays and looks after her young son at home the rest of the week. Before she came to The Hearing House, she worked in a private audiology clinic and also at the University, tutoring students in Audiology.



### Ruth Lin

Ruth started with The Hearing House team in November 2011, working on Mondays and Tuesdays. Prior to this, she has worked with both the adults and children from the Northern Cochlear Implant Programme for her Master's thesis research about cortical auditory evoked potentials. On her other days, she works at the Audiology department at the Greenlane Clinical Centre and Starship Children's Hospital.

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## Who's on the NCIP Audiological Team?

### ADULT

Ellen Giles - CI Rehabilitationist  
Gayle Watson - Hearing Therapist  
Caroline Selvaratnam - Audiologist

### PAEDIATRIC

Leigh Martelli - Audiologist  
Kate Jepsen - Audiologist  
Ruth Lin - Audiologist

## UPDATE ON NCIP WEBSITE

The website is currently being reviewed before going live; we hope to have this up and running shortly.

# Paediatric & Adult Programme Updates

## UPDATE ON ADULT NUMBERS

TOTAL NUMBERS FOR 2011-2012 YEAR	
Number of adults implanted under full funding	21
Number of adults implanted under the subsidised scheme	5

- 11 adults have been implanted to date. The surgeries for the remaining 10 clients are booked in April/May/June.
- 4 clients have received surgery under the subsidised scheme. The 5th one is scheduled in April.

ADULT NUMBERS 2011-2012 YEAR (AS OF 31/03/2012)	
Number of adults in assessment	17
Number of adults referred but not yet ready to start the assessment (Referred to Hearing Therapists or ENT departments in the local area for further testing)	43
Number of adults on eligibility list	75
Number of adults on review - not yet in criteria but close to meeting the criteria	16

The referral rate for July 2011 to February 2012 was an average of eight adults per month.

## ADULTS WITH COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

We have occasionally been asked how many adults have cochlear implants under the public system in New Zealand. Whilst we cannot provide an exact number, we can advise that the Northern Cochlear Implant Programme supports 215 adults with their cochlear implants at the present time.

## UPDATE ON PAEDIATRIC NUMBERS

Since September 2011 (September being the month of the previous Sound Matters), 11 children have received a cochlear implant, one of whom received bilateral cochlear implants. Interestingly over this period a lot of adolescent children have been implanted. Two referrals were received via Newborn Hearing Screening. There have been no privately funded implants over this period, and despite the Cochlear recall in September 2011, there have also been no reimplant surgeries in this time frame.

AGE YRS	IMPLANT RECEIVED 1/10/11-31/3/12		
	Public	Private	Reimplant
0-2	3	0	0
3-5	1	0	0
6-12	2	0	0
13-19	5	0	0

# Referral Process to Adult Programme

## Introducing the new referral form for clients wanting to access the Northern Adult CI Programme

Historically, a large number of referrals received into the adult programme have been incomplete, resulting in significant delays for patients as information is gathered. To reduce the waiting time, the adult programme has streamlined its referral process. In future, referrals will only be accepted into the programme if all the information outlined on the referral form is received. If some information is not available, please make a note of it to ensure the referral process is not delayed by efforts to gather missing information (e.g. omitted ENT reports).

### History

We ask that you pass on the information you collected in your detailed patient history. If an interpreter is needed, please let us know so we can co-ordinate appropriate services.

### Hearing

A full diagnostic hearing test is required. This includes PTA with bone conduction, speech audiometry, immittance audiometry, and unless contraindicated, acoustic reflexes. We ask that you send copies of past audiograms which may involve you collating information from more than one clinical source.

### Hearing Aids

Details of the model of aid/moulds worn and real ear information on current settings.

### Additional information

If the client has seen an ENT or hearing therapist in the past, a copy of their report is much appreciated. We also ask that you check that clients are New Zealand citizens or residents (a copy of a New Zealand passport or birth certificate is required.).

## Referral Criteria for Public funding of CIs

- Pi max of 60% or lower in the better ear.
- A severe hearing loss at 1000 Hz and above.
- The client needs to have had some access to sound when a child to ensure that listening pathways have at least partly developed.

*If you have a client who falls outside of the referral criteria, but you feel their case should be considered, please contact the adult CI team directly. We can advise on what is needed for you to review this client's hearing, and also can provide information on private access to CI services.*

## LOCATION OF REFERRAL FORM

NCIP website ([www.ncip.org.nz](http://www.ncip.org.nz))

NZAS website ([www.audiology.org.nz](http://www.audiology.org.nz))

University of Auckland Clinics ([www.clinics.auckland.ac.nz/uoa](http://www.clinics.auckland.ac.nz/uoa))

**Cochlear Implant Referral Form for Adults (18 years and over)**

To ensure your referral is accepted and actioned immediately, it is vital that we receive the complete information requested below. We are unable to accept your referral until we receive all the following information:

**Please complete all of the following referer details:**

Date of referral:	Click here to enter a date
Referer's Name & Title:	
Work address:	
Work phone:	
Work mobile:	
E Mail address:	

**Please complete all of the following client details:**

Client name:	
Date of birth:	
Age hearing loss had/has:	
Duration of hearing loss:	
Duration hearing loss has been severe/profound:	
Duration of time loss has been aided:	
Cause of hearing loss is (e.g. meningitis, congenital, progressive, other. (Note if a significant conductive loss is present other medical interventions must be investigated first):	
Primary mode of communication:	
State and Mode of hearing aid:	
Bimodal type:	

Referral Process to Adult Programme (page 2/2)

## Cochlear Implant Recipients



### JOHN GEORGE BARRY-MERRIMAN

John George is a nine-year-old boy with bilateral cochlear implants. John George lost his hearing following an episode of Meningococcal Type B Meningitis in October 2011. For John George and his family, learning that he had lost his hearing was one of the worst things they had experienced. His mother Anita said, 'You won't be able to hear me when I say I love you'. John George was referred to NCIP and quickly assessed by the team, eventually receiving approval for bilateral cochlear implants<sup>1</sup> in November 2011. His switch on was in mid-December 2011.

One of the concerns with hearing loss secondary to meningitis is that meningitis can cause cochlear ossification. This can make the insertion of a cochlear implant more difficult and can also reduce the effectiveness of the device. As such, it is crucially important that patients with post-meningitic hearing loss are referred for CI assessment immediately as the ossification can worsen over time. Children who develop hearing loss secondary to meningitis are eligible for two publically funded cochlear implants, rather than just one as is the case for other causes of hearing loss.

John George is a quiet boy with a huge smile; his mum, Anita, says that he is back to his cheeky self now that he can hear after receiving his cochlear implants. Indeed, his implants have been very successful, and he can now follow conversations and discriminate between different sounds. He still has some difficulties with his balance, but overall he is progressing wonderfully!

<sup>1</sup> The Government currently funds two electrode arrays and one external processor for children who are implanted as a result of meningitis.



### JANE BUTLER (A personal perspective)

I was picked up with a significant hearing loss at a very young age, and after 36 years of wearing a hearing aid in my right ear, I chose to have a cochlear implant as I believe "hearing and listening to new sounds will be fun!" I have two sons who are profoundly deaf: Ethan had his cochlear implant at 18 months; Tristan had his when he was nine years old.

For the first five years of wearing my cochlear implant, I became aware of all sorts of sounds I had not heard before. You would not believe what a noisy world it is! I hear more and more every day. It helps me in my job. I am looking forward to mixing more at work functions, something I used to find difficult. My conversations with family, friends, and colleagues are more fluent now — not so many "Whats?", not to having to ask to repeat it again. Now I don't have to ask my hearing husband to help me; he is proud of me. It's had a huge impact and is stress free for Steve!

Many people said that my speech has improved since the implant was switched on. Now I am able to correctly say a new word 100%, thanks to the cochlear implant. I am always keen to learn a new word every day.

We consider ourselves Deaf people and part of the Deaf Community. The cochlear implant is the best thing that has happened for me; the route we chose is up to us, and we feel privileged that we are part of two worlds — Deaf and Hearing — and that we can experience both.

## REFERRALS & FEEDBACK

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The Hearing House  
deaf kids talking  
a firstvoice centre

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND  
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau