



UPDATE

VIHSP pre-discharge screening is now in its 6th month of operation and, with nearly a full complement of staff, is achieving its targets. Along with inpatient screening, the program is also offering outpatient screening for those newborns whose hearing screen was not completed prior to their discharge from hospital.

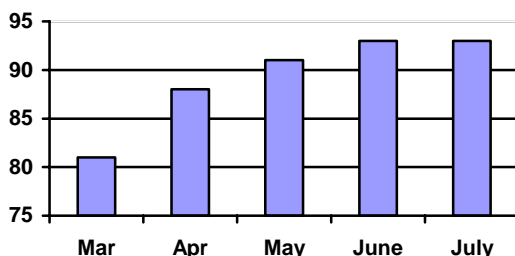
Over the past few weeks the VIHSP team has met with two international hearing professionals.

Dr Judith Marlowe, from California, US, gave a presentation attended by many of our screeners. Dr Marlowe has over 30 years experience in the establishment of newborn hearing assessment and habilitation programs, and initiated the first universal newborn ABR screening program in the US in 1983. She now travels on behalf of Natus, suppliers of the VIHSP AABR equipment.

Margaret Mishra is the co-ordinator of Newborn Hearing Screening at the Medical Center of Central Georgia in USA. It was a great opportunity for the team to meet with Margaret and discuss the different aspects of hearing screening and to learn from a program that has been running for many years.

VIHSP SCREENING STATISTICS 2005

Our coverage rates as of July 2005 are as follows



Our coverage continues to increase steadily (93% for the months of June and July). Our refer rate of 1.1% compares favourably to the recommended rate of 4% or less (Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, American Academy of Paediatrics, 2000)

Over 6,000 babies have been screened and seven babies with a significant hearing impairment have been detected. All received audiological assessments between 4 and 6 weeks corrected age. Three of these babies are still undergoing further assessment, while two have already been fitted with hearing aids, both before the age of 3 months.

VIHSP STAFF

Our third Area Coordinator, Elizabeth Stewart, joined VIHSP in March 2005 to work at the Monash Medical Centre. Elizabeth has a speech pathology background, complementing Carol Matthews' background in early intervention and Bernie McCudden's in population research.

Lisa Hanger has joined the central office as Program Support Officer. As well as supporting the program Directors, she screens in the RCH neonatal unit. Contact: lisa.hanger@rch.org.au / phone 9345 4941.

VIHSP's Deputy Director / Quality & Performance Manager, Maureen Spicer, will commence in September 2005. Maureen has many years of quality, evaluation and research in the paediatric nursing arena. She was recently awarded her PhD in *Coping and Self-concept of Adolescent Hearing Children of Deaf Parents Living in Bi-cultural Community*. Contact: maureen.spicer@rch.org.au, phone 03 9345 6985.

We have recently completed recruiting new screeners for each site.

DISTRACTION TEST

The Department of Human Services has taken the decision to discontinue the Ewing Distraction Test as of 1st July 2005. All Maternal & Child Health nurses have now been notified.

VIHSP would like to thank all MCH nurses for their commitment to the Distraction Test over many years, and for their ongoing support of hearing and language through the Universal Language Promotion Strategy and the 2 week and 8 month hearing risk factor referral program.

INFORMATION SHARING

VIHSP staff are spending a day with the NSW hearing screening program (SWIS-H) in mid-August. By sharing information and experiences both programs aim to further develop skills and knowledge in running efficient, well-regarded high quality screening programs.

NEW REPORTS OF INTEREST

Project HIEDI - update on hearing screening from NZ
http://www.nfd.org.nz/documents/Hiedi_28.pdf

Canadian Working Group on Childhood Hearing Report
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/eh-dp/index.html>

OTHER NEWS

To increase prenatal knowledge and awareness of screening, VIHSP brochures are now included in ante natal packs. We are already noticing more parents are aware of the program, making the screener's job a lot easier!

VIHSP staff have been busy with numerous in-services and presentations, both in the hospitals and the community.

The Department of Human Services Office for Children continues to convene its Early Childhood Intervention Services committee, with a major focus on appropriate services for young children with hearing loss.

More information is available about VIHSP on our website.
www.vihsp.org.au

This newsletter is produced by the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program for the various professional groups involved in infant hearing screening in Victoria. These include Maternal & Child Health nurses, audiologists, paediatricians, midwifery and neonatal care staff, early intervention staff and key government staff.