

VIHSP in 2007

The Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program has now been in operation for over two years. From its commencement in February 2005, VIHSP has screened over 46,000 newborns. VIHSP employs a staff of 33 including head office staff, area coordinators, hearing screeners and administrative assistants.

VIHSP to go Statewide!

The May 2007 Victorian Budget included significant funds for the expansion of VIHSP coverage. The maternity package includes a \$10 million expansion of the neonatal hearing screening program to ensure every Victorian newborn has access to a newborn hearing screen by the end of 2010. The former Victorian Premier, Mr Bracks, indicated that expansion of the program would begin mid 2008.

Some VIHSP Screening Statistics

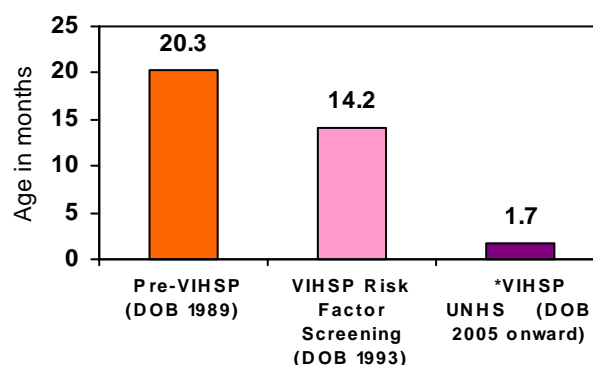
In the April to June 2007 quarter 5,227 babies were screened by VIHSP, a capture rate of 97.4% of eligible infants admitted to the participating hospitals. Thirty-nine (0.7%) babies were referred to audiology in this quarter.

Infants Born Apr- Jun 2007 eligible for newborn hearing screen		5,365
Family Declined	23	(0.4%)
Total Screened	5,227	(97.4%)
as inpatients	5,028	(96.2% of screened babies)
as outpatient	199	(3.8% of screened babies)
Passed Screen	5,188	(99.3% of screened babies)

To date, VIHSP newborn hearing screening has resulted in the detection of 61 infants with permanent bilateral congenital hearing loss of moderate or greater degree. VIHSP regularly reviews referral and diagnostic figures to ensure we are in line with the expected detection rates.

Comparing Median Age at Diagnosis in Victoria

The graph below shows us the median age in months of diagnosis for children in Victoria with permanent bilateral congenital hearing loss of moderate or greater degree. The median age fell from over 20 months for children born in 1989 (ie before VIHSP commenced) to around 14 months for 1993 births (during VIHSP's risk factor and distraction testing hearing screening program). Babies born since 2005 and offered the VIHSP universal screen (30% of Victorian children) are now diagnosed at less than two months of age. VIHSP aims to ensure these gains are maintained as universal newborn screening expands.



* For infants exposed to VIHSP newborn screening

Hearing Awareness Week

Sunday 19th to Saturday 25th August, 2007

Hearing Awareness Week is an annual event held in the last week of August. It provides an opportunity to raise community awareness of hearing impairment and ways to protect hearing. VIHSP will organise photographic displays in all the VIHSP screening hospitals so parents and hospital staff can learn more about newborn hearing screens.

Are you on the NHS-Aus Mailing List?

NHS-Aus is an e-mail network for professionals in Australia who are involved with clinical or administrative components regarding the detection, diagnosis and intervention of congenital hearing impairment in children. To find out more, go to www.vihsp.org.au and click on the Mailing List tab.

Australian Newborn Hearing Screening Conference, Brisbane - October 2007

The 4th Australian Newborn Hearing Screening Conference will be held on October 20th and 21st, 2007 at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Education Centre. The program promises a stimulating and productive few days with two international keynote speakers presenting at the conference:

- **Dr Karl White**, National Center for Hearing Assessment & Management, Utah State University
- **Dr Judith Marlowe**, Executive Director Audiology and Professional Relations, Natus Medical and Adjunct Honors Professor, Thomas More College, Kentucky

Registrations are now open at <https://register.yrd.com.au/NHS07>

Conference Program:

<https://register.yrd.com.au/NHS07/Draft%20Conference%20Program%20Online.pdf>

Pre-conference program:
<https://register.yrd.com.au/NHS07/Pre-Conference%20Program.pdf>

NHS 2008, Como, Italy - June 2008

The biennial international conference on newborn hearing screening will be happening in June 2008. Delegates will meet in Italy to discuss and share ideas, models and results on the most recent research in hearing screening, audiologic and medical diagnosis, intervention for infants and children with hearing loss, as well as models for hearing surveillance and outcomes for infants and children identified early.

A Guidelines Development Conference on Auditory Neuropathy (AN) is also being planned, with state-of-the-art information on identification, diagnosis and management of children with AN.

Submissions to present at NHS 2008 are particularly encouraged on:

- Neuromaturation and plasticity
- Genetics of hearing loss
- Auditory Neuropathy
- Cochlear implants
- Technological improvements in diagnosis and Hearing Aids
- Steady State Evoked Potentials
- Intervention strategies for infants
- Changing criteria for cochlear implantation in early infancy
- Outcome measures of early intervention

Deadline for abstract submission: January 25, 2008. Further details will be available on the website www.nhs2008.polimi.it by the end of September 2007.

Infant Hearing Loss New Diagnosis Clinic

A new public clinic has commenced at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital.

Families whose baby has recently been diagnosed with a hearing loss are encouraged to attend the *Infant Hearing Loss New Diagnosis Clinic* (clinic name to be finalised). The clinic will be staffed by **Kerryn Saunders** (Paediatrician), **Libby Rose** (ENT), and **Robert Briggs** (ENT).

It aims to provide convenient access to paediatric and otologic assessments for children who have recently been diagnosed with congenital hearing loss following newborn hearing screening referral. Other children that clinicians feel appropriate can also be referred.

Direct referrals can be made to this public clinic by audiologists working in diagnostic audiology services. The diagnostic clinic will be a monthly service, held on **Monday afternoons**, at the **Eye and Ear Hospital** (Medical Suite, Level 8, Smorgon Family Wing).

Bookings can be made by contacting Tamara Jimenez at the School of Audiology on tel: 9929 8740 and fax: 9662 3312.

New Resources for Parents

Two new resources have been developed for families whose baby has recently been diagnosed with a hearing loss.

The **Department of Human Services** has led the development of a **Hearing Impairment Information Kit**, *When a baby's hearing loss is diagnosed - Fact Sheets for families*. The kit has been designed to provide quality information at the time their baby or young infant is diagnosed with a hearing impairment, and will be distributed to families via diagnostic audiology services. To view the contents of the kit go to the DHS website or click on the link http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-intervention/publications/hearing_impairment_information_kit

Deaf Children Australia has produced a **booklet aimed at families** of newly diagnosed deaf and hearing impaired children. The booklet, *Where do we go from hear?*, is a collection of real-life stories written by parents of children with hearing loss. For a copy of the booklet, please contact Deaf Children Australia on 1800 645 956 or email helpline@deafchildren.org.au

This newsletter is produced by the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program for 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. If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, please contact the VIHSP office on 9345 4941.