

International Ear & Hearing Care Day 2015

Abstract

The International Ear and Hearing Care Day is celebrated annually on **3 March**. The aim of this Day is to raise the awareness of the general public about hearing loss and ear diseases, and offer various possibilities for prevention through appropriate ear care.

Theme for the International Ear and Hearing Care Day 2015

This year, the theme chosen by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) for the celebration of the International Ear Care Day is “**Make listening safe**”. This initiative, promoted and supported by organisations like CBM, aims to **address the lack of awareness** regarding the possibilities for prevention of hearing loss induced by exposure to excessive noise, through the changing of lifestyle and the adoption of simple ear care measures.

How does CBM help make listening safe?

CBM contributes to making listening safe through the following steps:

1. **Raising awareness** at all levels regarding exposure to excessive noise being a major avoidable cause of permanent hearing loss worldwide.
2. **Collaborating with advocacy** activities for the promotion of:
 - Use of noise-free incubators, or noise reduction measures at newborn care units
 - Safe household and school environment for children (free of excessive noise)
 - Reduction of environmental noise (law implementation and/or enforcement)
 - Informed and rational exposure to recreational noise
 - Safe environment at work through occupational health guidelines and policies
 - Production of safe and affordable hearing devices and other sound instruments.
3. **Encouraging a Public Health** approach, including:
 - Universal screening programmes for early detection of hearing loss

- Early intervention and education programmes
- Counselling and support services for persons exposed to excessive noise
- Adequate and affordable ear and hearing health services.

CBM statistics 2014

- Persons receiving EHC services: 700,000
- Audiological tests performed: 150,000
- Annual screenings: 400,000 (more than 50% children)
- Non-surgical treatments for Chronic Otitis Media: 50,000
- Ear/ ENT surgeries: 15,000
- Hearing aids provided: 20,000
- Children with hearing loss enrolled in CBM supported programmes: 25,000
- CBR services offered to 40,000 persons with hearing loss.

Global figures and main causes of hearing loss

Globally, hearing loss is the **most prevalent sensory disability**, WHO estimates that there are 360 million persons living with disabling hearing loss in the world¹. This number continues to increase, especially in ageing people. Hence it is important to put the **effects of exposure to excessive noise** as a possible cause of permanent hearing loss into context.

Besides the exposure to excessive noise, the causes leading to deafness and hearing loss are many, including **hereditary factors, congenital infections, birth problems, ageing, effects of medications and chemicals, and infectious diseases** (meningitis, malaria etc.).

Impacted wax (earwax build-up) is probably the most common cause of mild to moderate hearing loss. Long-lasting **infections of the middle ear** (called Chronic Otitis Media) is a cause of primary concern in low and middle income countries, the most common cause of mild to moderate hearing loss in children in these countries; its complications may lead to death. **Otitis Media with Effusion** and **Head Trauma** are also common, especially in children, and may lead to permanent hearing impairment. Furthermore, **nutritional deficiencies** such as lack of iodine in the diet cause hearing loss in some poorer parts of the world.

Why March 3

The choice of the date 3rd March is due to the shape of the numbers in 3.3, being representative of the two ears. In April 2007, the First International Conference on Prevention and Rehabilitation of Hearing Impairment was held in Beijing. A key output of this conference was the "Beijing Declaration" which included the recommendation to **establish "International Ear Care Day"** to raise awareness of hearing care and prevention of hearing loss. This day has been observed and supported by partner organisations all over the world.

- 1) Millions live with hearing loss that can be treated or prevented
<http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/news/Millionslivewithhearingloss.pdf>