

PROFILES OF HEARING HELP-SEEKERS AT PRIVATE HEARING CARE CENTRES IN KUANTAN

Nur Fatin Nabilah Binti Abas¹, Nurlin Ali Hanafiah¹

¹ Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kulliyah of Allied Health Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Pahang, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: A hearing help-seeker is someone who is aware of having hearing impairment and searches for information regarding hearing impairment by involving the family physician, asking to be referred to an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist, or finding an audiologist or hearing aid clinic. An adult who acknowledges a hearing impairment may choose to go a public clinic, private clinic, or a hearing aid centre to seek consultation. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the profiles of hearing help seekers who seek consultation in the private hearing care centres in Kuantan.

Methods: Through retrospective study design, client files from four private hearing centres in Kuantan were reviewed. The files were of clients of Malaysian citizenship aged 18 years and above who visited the centres from the beginning of operation until December 2017. Audiometric data, demographic profiles, and decision regarding hearing aid uptake were recorded.

Results: The results showed that the majority of the adults were Malay (69.6%), followed by Chinese (26.4%) and Indian (4.1%). Overall, more male adults (53.8%) sought hearing help and the majority aged 70-79 years (23.2%). The majority had moderate hearing loss (30.4%) on left ear while (32.7%) on the right. About 52.4% of people who had hearing impairment accept for hearing aid.

Conclusions: This study provides some insight that could help audiologists, specifically those in the private services, to develop targeted programmes to improve hearing and hearing aid awareness and encourage those perceived to have a hearing impairment to seek hearing help.

Keywords: Hearing-help seekers, hearing aid uptake, private hearing centres, demographic profiles, audiometric.

Corresponding author: Nurlin Ali Hanafiah (nurlin@iium.edu.my)