Cochlear Implant Guidelines for Referral of Adults

Referrals

Referrals can be made by healthcare professionals. Individuals are welcome to make informal enquiries to the cochlear implant programme.

Audiometric Criteria

Patients should have recently had a trial with an appropriate hearing aid. They should demonstrate limited open-set recognition of words when appropriately aided in an audio-alone condition. As a guide the hearing loss will be severe/profound with average thresholds worse than or equal to 90dB at 2KHz and 4KHz. Sloping losses may be considered.

Age of onset of profound deafness

Patients will possess the linguistic skills necessary to participate in the programme of evaluation and rehabilitation. Therefore, it is likely that the majority of adult patients will be post lingually deafened or have had a progressive hearing loss.

Fitness for surgery

All patients referred should be fit for general anaesthesia. Patients with chronic active ear disease are not normally accepted until this has been adequately treated.

Psychological state

Patients should be psychologically stable in order to participate in the assessment and rehabilitation programme.

Aetiology

Patients will not be excluded on the grounds of aetiology other than in respect of criteria covered above and where a central or retrocochlear pathology is indicated. We would encourage fast-track of referrals in the case of deafness following meningitis.

Other disabilities

No other disability in and of itself will constitute grounds for exclusion. Patients must be capable, however, of complying with the requirements of the programme of rehabilitation and evaluation.

Support

Local support is desirable but there is no absolute requirement.
General information for referrers

Funding

Approval is sought for charging and full costs requested from the patients’ healthcare trust on an individual basis.

Procedure

The programme provides a multidisciplinary assessment; information and support prior to the operation, the resource and expertise to implant, switch-on and tune the device, the follow up rehabilitation and ongoing support and information.

Following an initial assessment the patient will undergo, if suitable, a full cochlear implant assessment including CT and MRI scans. Patients possessing retrocochlear pathologies or cerebral defects will be excluded. The programme prefers to carry out the necessary electrophysical and radiological assessments in Bristol.

This is a comprehensive programme and we will arrange for long term monitoring and maintenance of equipment, the cost of which will be charged to the referring trust. Patients should demonstrate a willingness and long term commitment to participate in the programme.

Results

The ultimate benefit achievable cannot be accurately predicted prior to the operation. However, there will be a clear programme of postoperative testing, tuning and rehabilitation to achieve the best results possible.

Research and Audit

The programme is involved in continuing audit and research into cochlear implants. We will continue to evaluate results from the programme to provide information for this research.

If there is any doubt as to the suitability of a patient for referral please contact the West of England Cochlear Implant Programme

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