

The experience of parents after a diagnosis of permanent hearing loss: two approaches to data analysis yield similar but different results.

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Objectives: The objectives of this research were: (1) to explore the self-described experiences of parents after their child's diagnosis of permanent hearing loss; and (2) to use two approaches to data analysis to compare/contrast the results.

Background: Most babies born D/deaf or hard of hearing (Dd/HH) are born to parents where both parents have typical hearing and were not expecting it. For many parents of children identified with permanent hearing loss, the pace at which decisions about hearing aids, cochlear implants, and language development pathways must be made creates stress and parents may feel a lack of knowledge upon which to base decisions. The future for their newborn child feels uncertain and unpredictable and parents express the need for timely supports.

Methods: We accessed archival data from the Hands & Voices website, a publicly available parent-to-parent support website for parents of children who are Dd/HH and obtained 18 'blog' posts. For data analysis purposes we: (1) analyzed emotions and categorized them based on Parrott's Socio-Psychological Model of Emotions; and then (2) used a more traditional open coding, narrative theme analysis.

Results: Parrott's model illustrated an array of emotions experienced by parents when their child was initially diagnosed. The traditional approach to data analysis encompassed four core themes and emotion encompassed only one core theme. The findings illustrated that important differences were obtained using a more traditional approach to data analysis.

Conclusions: This research aids in verifying findings of existing literature regarding the experience of parents when their child is initially diagnosed as Dd/HH. The findings demonstrate that researchers must be cognizant of the influence that different approaches to analyzing data will have on the overall findings of the research.