

Validity and reliability of a new clinical tool designed to assess the audiological needs of individuals with hearing loss.

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Objectives: To determine the validity, reliability and clinical usefulness of a tool designed to assess the audiological needs of individuals with hearing loss.

Background: Needs assessment is an important part of the audiological evaluation. A protocol was recently developed to guide this intervention. In addition, a clinical tool (a questionnaire based on the needs assessment protocol) was created to support its application in the clinic. It is important to know the psychometric properties of this clinical tool and to explore its usefulness.

Methods: 11 audiology graduate students and four recently graduated audiologists participated in this counterbalanced crossover experimental study (N=15). Prior to data collection, participants followed a two-hour training course about the new protocol and clinical tool. Then, they were invited to assess the audiological needs of two simulated patients (SP). Participants were randomly divided into two groups. Participants of the first group conducted an interview with one SP, complying to the protocol, but without the use of the clinical tool. Following their assessment, they wrote a conventional audiological report. Next, all participants performed another evaluation with the other SP. During this second interview, they were asked to use the assessment protocol, but with the support of the clinical tool/questionnaire. Participants assigned to the second group did the same tasks, but in reverse order. All assessments with SPs were filmed and audiological reports and filled clinical tools were collected. These data were rated by two independent experts.

Results: The experiment is now completed, and data are presently being analyzed. Results and interpretation will be presented at the conference.

Conclusions: A research project is currently underway to assess the effectiveness and applicability of the protocol and the clinical tool in clinical primary care settings.