

Project Number: CC010

Title: Is there a relationship between hearing loss and cleft speech characteristics in children born with cleft palate?

PI: Sharon Baker

Affiliation: Cardiff Metropolitan University

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Scientific Outline:

There is limited evidence regarding the impact of hearing loss on speech development in children born with a cleft palate. This MSc dissertation will evaluate reported hearing outcomes of children born with a cleft palate (in UK) at age 18months/2years and the presence of any cleft speech characteristics using data from the speech and language therapy assessment.

The prevalence of otitis media with effusion in children with cleft palate is reported to be around 90% (Sheehan, 2003). An audit of children known to the South Wales cleft team, carried out by the applicant, identified that 73% of children with cleft palate had been diagnosed with a hearing loss by the age of 2;6 (32/44 children). Children have been identified as developing cleft speech characteristics as young as age 18 months. These errors in children's speech can be difficult to remediate requiring high levels of specialist speech and language therapy intervention.

This study aims to determine whether there is a relationship between hearing status and speech development to add to the limited available literature and will consider how this could impact on intervention for both audiology and speech and language therapy services.