

HEARING AIDS: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND CONCEPTS

Martha Rubin (editor)

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Reviewed by Hollis Corbin

This book is the transcript of a conference at Lexington School for the Deaf on current developments and procedures in hearing aid technology and evaluations. Papers presented by a number of recognized authorities in audiology, engineering and the hearing aid industry are grouped into four areas, each dealing with a particular aspect of the hearing aid and its effectiveness for the hearing impaired.

The first group of contributors, J. Donald Causey, Edward Hardick and Hubert Gerstman, discussed current developments with hearing aids, hearing aid dispensing models, aural rehabilitation and described a new sentence test being designed for speech discrimination.

The second group of contributors discussed the ANSI standards for hearing aids. Laura Wilber and John C. Sinclair discussed the history of standards for hearing aids and the need for better standards. Sinclair also reviewed the FDA involvement in hearing aids and the implications of this involvement. Wayne Olsen gave a very clear informative report on what the new standards mean and their applications to hearing aid measurement.

The third group presented different views on hearing aid evaluations for infants and very young children. Martha Rubin, Jane Mandell and Annette Zaner discussed various methods of evaluating and fitting hearing aids on small children and the problems encountered. Leahea Grammitico discussed "Cognition in the Development of Listening Skills," giving examples of situations in auditory training used to encourage development "thinking" skills as well as listening skills.

In the fourth section, Mark Ross reviewed the traditional hearing aid evaluation method and the particular inadequacies of this method. Levitt, White and Resnick introduced the work they have done on a "wearable master hearing aid". Edgar Villchur presented an experimental program for signal processing in hearing aids. Geary McCandless discussed the importance of the "loudness discomfort level" and the acoustic reflex in hearing aid fittings.

Following each group of papers is a discussion section in which members of the audience interacted with the contributors. There are also two appendices: one involving legislation regarding hearing aid standards; the second, the proposed ANSI standards for hearing aids.

This book, although a conference transcript, presents new and interesting possibilities for more accurate and effective hearing aid fittings. The contributors expressed their concerns over the currently inadequate hearing aid evaluation and delivery systems and presented a number of practical ways audiologists can more efficiently and effectively provide hearing aid services.