

**Neonatal Hearing Screening**

Edited by: Elca T. Swigart

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Reviewer: Andree Durieux-Smith

The aim of this book is to present the reader with a broad coverage of information emanating from diverse sources in the area of hearing screening. There are fourteen chapters, each written by a different author, and the book is divided into two sections. The first section, comprising eight chapters, covers the information to consider in implementing a neonatal hearing screening program. Marion Downs presents the rationale for neonatal hearing screening including important incidence information together with economic figures, which are always useful when discussing the relevance of hearing screening, and the sensitivity and specificity of screening measures is addressed in this and in other chapters (chapter by T. Fria). K. Pike Gerkin discusses the development and outcome of the high risk register giving important information on each high risk factor and its association with hearing loss. Chapters four and five discuss two different kinds of hearing screening procedures for infants, namely a behavioural and electrophysiological approach. G. Marcellino presents information on the Crib-o-gram. He indicates that this procedure has been used successfully in many screening programs even though some research has shown this procedure to have limited reliability and validity. Jacobson and Hyde, in an excellent chapter, discuss the strengths and limitations of the ABR for newborn hearing screening. All factors important to ABR testing and interpretation are presented and discussed. These authors address all the issues which imitators of hearing screening programs have to struggle with; namely the infant with the mild loss, conductive loss and target populations. These authors believe that ABR will probably survive as a major component of any screening strategy. The importance of follow-up of infants in a neonatal hearing screening program is presented by Laszlo Stein. Interprofessional and administrative issues in the implementation of a hospital based neonatal hearing screening program are addressed by E.T. Swigart. This chapter deals with many

of the practical aspects of screening programs such as cooperation of hospital staff, information to parents etc. The last chapter of section I talks about large scale high risk neonatal hearing screening (T.M. Mahoney). Information is given on governmental high risk hearing screening programs in Canada and the U.S.A. using birth certificate data (Utah) and hospital questionnaires. The major purpose of this chapter is to disseminate information concerning recent progress in government large scale high risk hearing screening programs in North America. This chapter does not include any critical evaluation of programs or outcome measures.

The second section of the book presents six 'model' programs for high risk infants. Some of these programs use the Crib-o-gram (McClatchie and Mikulich), ABR (chapters by Kurmin and Fria, Salmay and Weyland) and a combination approach of behavioural testing and ABR (chapters by Meneka, Swigart, Manoney and Eichwald). The programs are presented in a 'this is how we do it' fashion and there is little critical evaluation of results. This section of the book offers a lot of practical information on the mechanisms of screening programs. Form letters are presented in appendices (chapters by Moneka, Swigart) and the practical aspects are certainly useful to anyone starting a screening program.

On the whole, the book should be of interest to audiologists contemplating the initiation of a screening program of high risk infants. What is missing in the book is a final chapter addressing the problems which plague all professionals involved in hearing screening programs. These include the choice of a valid and reliable screening procedure. What is apparent in the programs presented in the book is that cost and practical considerations often determine what screening method to use. Another issue in need of being addressed is the target population for screening programs. Are we interested in identifying the mild conductive hearing loss in infancy?