



Queensland Government

Epidemiology of hearing health in the refugee population in Logan, Queensland Australia.

Sally Bourne¹, Associate Professor Wayne J. Wilson²

¹Logan Hospital – Metro South, Queensland Health, Meadowbrook, Australia.

²The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Australia

Background

- Each year, approximately 1800 refugees settle in Queensland under Australia’s Humanitarian Program.
- The refugee population primarily comes from a range of source countries such as Iraq, Syria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Eritrea, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.
- All refugees are entitled to medical assessments and intervention in Queensland Health. The assessment of hearing is an essential component of a refugee’s initial medical assessment of health and wellbeing.
- The Logan Hospital Audiology Department (Metro South, Queensland Health) is the main provider for the assessment of hearing in the refugee population for refugees who have settled in the Logan catchment area.
- The incidence of hearing loss in the refugee population, settling in the Logan catchment, has not been previously reported.

Objective

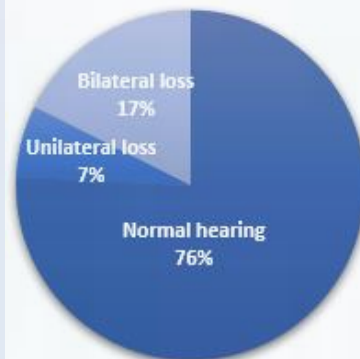
To investigate the incidence, and type, of hearing loss in the refugee population who presented for a hearing assessment at the Logan Hospital Audiology Department.

Methods

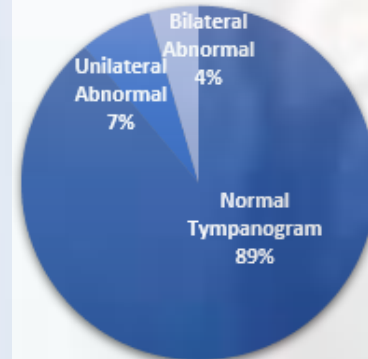
- An audiological assessment (Pure Tone Audiogram / Visual Reinforcement Audiometry and Tympanometry) was complete on a total of 244 refugee patients (aged 1-69 years).
- An analysis of hearing and middle ear status in the refugee population was conducted.
- The incidence of hearing loss in the refugee population according to their region of origin (Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South East Asia, and “Other”) was also examined.

Results

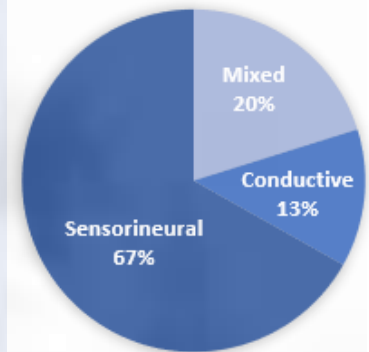
The majority of refugees had normal hearing.



The majority of refugees had aerated middle ears.



Of those refugee patients who had a hearing loss, the most prevalent type of hearing loss was sensorineural.



Incidence of Normal Hearing according to Region of Origin

Region of Origin	South East Asia	Middle East	Central Asia	Africa	“Other”
Incidence of Normal Hearing	61.3%	62.5%	87.5%	93.4%	100%

Refugees from the Middle East and South-East Asia regions had lower incidences of normal hearing.

Conclusion

- The **majority** of refugee patients had **normal hearing thresholds (76%)** and **aerated middle ears (89%)**.
- The most **prevalent type of hearing loss was sensorineural (67%)**.
- Refugee patients from **Middle Eastern and South-East Asian regions have a lower incidence of normal hearing** compared to refugee patients from Africa, Central Asia, and “Other” world regions.

Contact: Sally.Bourne@health.qld.gov.au