LISTENING OUT FOR HEARING PROBLEMS

TAILORING COMPREHENSIVE, EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT PLANS FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED BABIES, CHILDREN AND ADULTS.

Hearing impairment is often missed as it is not usually a part of general health screenings in Singapore. Even with paediatric hearing loss screening, some children are still missed as they acquired the impairment only after infancy.

According to the *Singapore National Health Survey 2010* which Adjunct Associate Professor Lynne Lim, a leading paediatric and adult Ear Nose & Throat specialist, assisted with, one in five adults between 50-59 and two in five adults between 60-69 already have hearing loss. With each additional 10 years, the incidence increases dramatically.

Also, only one in 10 adults who require hearing aids uses them, which is unfortunate as hearing loss should be rehabilitated in the same way spectacles manage deteriorating eyesight.

NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS

The math of sound is fascinating, says Adjunct Assoc Prof Lim, as well as troubling. She explains that with a small increase in volume for sound that is already loud – like music played via earphones – audio intensity easily jumps 100 times. This is why many teenagers and young people may have hearing loss without realising it, as listening to their MP3 at maximum volume can risk hearing loss in less than 15 minutes.

Because the importance of hearing for health and well-being is greatly underestimated, diagnosis is usually delayed by five to 10 years – leading to risks of academic and speech delays, poor communication and misunderstanding, social isolation, reduced job options, depression, falls and reduced safety. Current research also

shows that hearing loss is associated with poor memory, cognitive function and even dementia.

ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS

As a leading specialist in this field, Adjunct Assoc Prof Lim is particular about conducting a thorough investigation for accurate diagnosis, as it guides her to map the best treatment plans for patients and their families.

Her clinics are outfitted with a comprehensive range of specialised testing and diagnostic equipment, including soundproof and sound-treated rooms for all ages of hearing and related tests, so that patients complete their tests in one visit. Examinations are conducted by an ENT doctor and a professional audiologist; and where necessary, by technical specialists in hearing aids and surgical middle ear and cochlear implants. Related problems like ringing in the ears and ear-related giddiness can also be managed together.

Additionally, the clinic treats complex disorders, such as malformed outer ears with absent ear canals, and Central Auditory Processing Disorder – an often missed condition where patients are confused by sounds due to an inability to decode them in the brain.

Adjunct Assoc Prof Lim emphasises the importance of coordinating multidisciplinary medical, educational and developmental care by collaborating with colleagues from a strong network of equally established medical practices.

The Centre puts a strong focus on trust, excellence and evidence-based options, and strives to truly understand the concerns of each patient and his or her family.

DR LYNNE LIM EAR NOSE THROAT & HEARING CENTRE (CHILD & ADULT)

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Dr Lynne Lim Ear Nose Throat & Hearing Centre provides a wide range of treatments for ENT, and head and neck conditions in children and adults. It is headed by a specialist, Senior Consultant Adjunct Assoc Prof Lim, a pioneer of various surgeries and an active researcher and teacher at the National University of Singapore.

SERVICES

- Genetic ear loss in children
- Congenital ear conditions in children
- Otitis media
- Eustachian tube dysfunction
- Age-related hearing loss
- Noise-induced hearing loss
- Cochlear and middle ear implants