bilirubinemia that requires exchange transfusion or culture-positive sepsis), a repeat hearing screening is recommended before discharge.

3. Diagnostic audiology evaluation
   - Audiologists with skills and expertise in evaluating newborn and young infants with hearing loss should provide audiology diagnostic and auditory habilitation services (selection and fitting of amplification device).
   - At least 1 ABR test is recommended as part of a complete audiology diagnostic evaluation for children younger than 3 years for confirmation of permanent hearing loss.
   - The timing and number of hearing reevaluations for children with risk factors should be customized and individualized depending on the relative likelihood of a subsequent delayed-onset hearing loss. Infants who pass the neonatal screening but have a risk factor should have at least 1 diagnostic audiology assessment by 24 to 30 months of age. Early and more frequent assessment may be indicated for children with cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection, syndromes associated with progressive hearing loss, neurodegenerative disorders, trauma, or culture-positive postnatal infections associated with sensorineural hearing loss; for children who have received extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) or chemotherapy; and when there is caregiver concern or a family history of hearing loss.
   - For families who elect amplification, infants in whom permanent hearing loss is diagnosed should be fitted with an amplification device within 1 month of diagnosis.
4. Medical evaluation
   - For infants with confirmed hearing loss, a genetics consultation should be offered to their families.
   - Every infant with confirmed hearing loss should be evaluated by an otolaryngologist who has knowledge of pediatric hearing loss and have at least 1 examination to assess visual acuity by an ophthalmologist who is experienced in evaluating infants.
   - The risk factors for congenital and acquired hearing loss have been combined in a single list rather than grouped by time of onset.
5. Early intervention
   - All families of infants with any degree of bilateral or unilateral permanent hearing loss should be considered eligible for early intervention services.
   - There should be recognized central referral points of entry that ensure specialty services for infants with confirmed hearing loss.
   - Early intervention services for infants with confirmed hearing loss should be provided by professionals who have expertise in hearing loss, including educators of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists.
   - In response to a previous emphasis on "natural environments," the JCIH recommends that both home-based and center-based intervention options be offered.
6. Surveillance and screening in the medical home
   - For all infants, regular surveillance of developmental milestones, auditory skills, parental concerns, and middle-ear status should be performed in the medical home, consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) pediatric periodicity schedule. All infants should have an objective standardized screening of global development with a validated assessment tool at 9, 18, and 24 to 30 months of age or at any time if the health care professional or family has concern.
   - Infants who do not pass the speech-language portion of a medical home global screening or for whom there is a concern regarding hearing or language should be referred for speech-language evaluation and audiology assessment.
7. Communication
   - The birth hospital, in collaboration with the state EHDI coordinator, should ensure that the hearing-screening results are conveyed to the parents and the medical home.
   - Parents should be provided with appropriate follow-up and resource information, and hospitals should ensure that each infant is linked to a medical home.
   - Information at all stages of the EHDI process is to be communicated to the family in a culturally sensitive and understandable format.
   - Individual hearing-screening information and audiology diagnostic and habilitation information should be promptly transmitted to the medical home and the state EHDI coordinator.
   - Families should be made aware of all communication options and available hearing technologies (presented in an unbiased manner). Informed family choice and desired outcome guide the decision-making process.
8. Information infrastructure
   - States should implement data-management and -tracking systems as part of an integrated child health information system to monitor the quality of EHDI services and provide recommendations for improving systems of care.

confirm the presence of hearing loss at no later than 3 months of age.

3. All infants with confirmed permanent hearing loss should receive early intervention services as soon as possible after diagnosis but at no later than 6 months of age. A simplified, single point of entry into an intervention system that is appropriate for children with hearing loss is optimal.
4. The EHDI system should be family centered with infant and family rights and privacy guaranteed through informed choice, shared decision-making, and parental consent in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Families should have access to information about all intervention and treatment options and counseling regarding hearing loss.
5. The child and family should have immediate access to high-quality technology including hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other assistive devices when appropriate.
6. All infants and children should be monitored for hearing loss in the medical home.[15] Continued assessment of communication development should be provided by appropriate professionals to all children with or without risk indicators for hearing loss.
7. Appropriate interdisciplinary intervention programs for infants with hearing loss and their families should be provided by professionals who are knowledgeable about childhood hearing loss. Intervention programs should recognize and build on strengths, informed choices, traditions, and cultural beliefs of the families.
8. Information systems should be designed and implemented to interface with electronic health charts and should be used to measure outcomes and report the effectiveness of EHDI services at the patient, practice, community, state, and federal levels.

GUIDELINES FOR EHDI PROGRAMS

The 2007 guidelines were developed to update the 2000 JCIH position statement principles and to support the goals of universal access to hearing screening, evaluation, and intervention for newborn and young infants embodied in *Healthy People 2010*.[9] The guidelines provide current information on the development and implementation of successful EHDI systems.

Hearing screening should identify infants with specifically defined hearing loss on the basis of investigations of long-term, developmental consequences of hearing loss in infants, currently available physiologic screening techniques, and availability of effective intervention in concert with established principles of health screening.[15–18] Studies have demonstrated that current screening technologies are effective in identifying hearing loss of moderate and greater degree.[19] In addition, studies of children with permanent hearing loss indicate that moderate or greater degrees of hearing loss can have significant effects on language, speech, academic, and social-emotional development.[20] High-risk target populations also include infants in the NICU, because research data have indicated that this population is at highest risk of having neural hearing loss.[21–23]

The JCIH, however, is committed to the goal of identifying all degrees and types of hearing loss in childhood and recognizes the developmental consequences of even mild degrees of permanent hearing loss. Recent evidence, however, has suggested that current hearing-screening technologies fail to identify some infants with mild forms of hearing loss.[24,25] In addition, depending on the screening technology selected, infants with hearing loss related to neural conduction disorders or "auditory neuropathy/auditory dyssynchrony" may not be detected through a UNHS program. Although the JCIH recognizes that these disorders may result in delayed communication,[26–28] currently recommended screening algorithms (ie, use of otoacoustic emission [OAE] testing alone) preclude universal screening for these disorders. Because these disorders typically occur in children who require NICU care,[21] the JCIH recommends screening this group with the technology capable of detecting auditory neuropathy/dyssynchrony: automated ABR measurement.

All infants, regardless of newborn hearing-screening outcome, should receive ongoing monitoring for development of age-appropriate auditory behaviors and communication skills. Any infant who demonstrates delayed auditory and/or communication skills development, even if he or she passed newborn hearing screening, should receive an audiological evaluation to rule out hearing loss.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of EHDI programs depends on families working in partnership with professionals as a well-coordinated team. The roles and responsibilities of each team member should be well defined and clearly understood. Essential team members are the birth hospital, families, pediatricians or primary health care professionals (ie, the medical home), audiologists, otolaryngologists, speech-language pathologists, educators of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and other early intervention professionals involved in delivering EHDI services.[29,30] Additional services including genetics, ophthalmology, developmental pediatrics, service coordination, supportive family education, and counseling should be available.[31]

The birth hospital is a key member of the team. The birth hospital, in collaboration with the state EHDI coordinator, should ensure that parents and primary health care professionals receive and understand the hearing-screening results, that parents are provided with appropriate follow-up and resource information, and

Evaluation: 6 to 36 Months of Age

For subsequent testing of infants and toddlers at developmental ages of 6 to 36 months, the confirmatory audiological test battery includes:

- Child and family history.
- Parental report of auditory and visual behaviors and communication milestones.
- Behavioral audiometry (either visual reinforcement or conditioned-play audiometry, depending on the child's developmental level), including pure-tone audiometry across the frequency range for each ear and speech-detection and -recognition measures.
- OAE testing.
- Acoustic immittance measures (tympanometry and acoustic reflex thresholds).
- ABR testing if responses to behavioral audiometry are not reliable or if ABR testing has not been performed in the past.

Other Audiological Test Procedures

At this time, there is insufficient evidence for use of the auditory steady-state response as the sole measure of auditory status in newborn and infant populations.[58] Auditory steady-state response is a new evoked-potential test that can accurately measure auditory sensitivity beyond the limits of other test methods. It can determine frequency-specific thresholds from 250 Hz to 8 kHz. Clinical research is being performed to investigate its potential use in the standard pediatric diagnostic test battery. Similarly, there are insufficient data for routine use of acoustic middle-ear muscle reflexes in the initial diagnostic assessment of infants younger than 4 months.[59] Both tests could be used to supplement the battery or could be included at older ages. Emerging technologies, such as broad-band reflectance, may be used to supplement conventional measures of middle-ear status (tympanometry and acoustic reflexes) as the technology becomes more widely available.[59]

Medical Evaluation

Every infant with confirmed hearing loss and/or middle-ear dysfunction should be referred for otologic and other medical evaluation. The purpose of these evaluations is to determine the etiology of hearing loss, to identify related physical conditions, and to provide recommendations for medical/surgical treatment as well as referral for other services. Essential components of the medical evaluation include clinical history, family history of childhood-onset permanent hearing loss, identification of syndromes associated with early- or late-onset permanent hearing loss, a physical examination, and indicated radiologic and laboratory studies (including genetic testing). Portions of the medical evaluation, such as urine culture for CMV, a leading cause of hearing loss, might even begin in the birth hospital, particularly for infants who spend time in the NICU.[60–62]

Pediatrician/Primary Care Physician

The infant's pediatrician or other primary health care professional is responsible for monitoring the general health, development, and well-being of the infant. In addition, the primary care physician must assume responsibility to ensure that the audiological assessment is conducted on infants who do not pass screening and must initiate referrals for medical specialty evaluations necessary to determine the etiology of the hearing loss. Middle-ear status should be monitored, because the presence of middle-ear effusion can further compromise hearing. The primary care physician must partner with other specialists, including the otolaryngologist, to facilitate coordinated care for the infant and family. Because 30% to 40% of children with confirmed hearing loss will demonstrate developmental delays or other disabilities, the primary care physician should closely monitor developmental milestones and initiate referrals related to suspected disabilities.[63] The medical home algorithm for management of infants with either suspected or proven permanent hearing loss is provided in Appendix 1.[15]

The pediatrician or primary care physician should review every infant's medical and family history for the presence of risk indicators that require monitoring for delayed-onset or progressive hearing loss and should ensure that an audiological evaluation is completed for children at risk of hearing loss at least once by 24 to 30 months of age, regardless of their newborn screening results.[25] Infants with specific risk factors, such as those who received ECMO therapy and those with CMV infection, are at increased risk of delayed-onset or progressive hearing loss[64–67] and should be monitored closely. In addition, the primary care physician is responsible for ongoing surveillance of parent concerns about language and hearing, auditory skills, and developmental milestones of all infants and children regardless of risk status, as outlined in the pediatric periodicity schedule published by the AAP.[16]

Children with cochlear implants may be at increased risk of acquiring bacterial meningitis compared with children in the general US population.[68] The CDC recommends that all children with, and all potential recipients of, cochlear implants follow specific recommendations for pneumococcal immunization that apply to cochlear implant users and that they receive age-appropriate *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccines. Recommendations for the timing and type of pneumococcal vaccine vary with age and immunization history and should be discussed with a health care professional.[69]

Otolaryngologist

Otolaryngologists are physicians and surgeons who diagnose, treat, and manage a wide range of diseases of the head and neck and specialize in treating hearing and vestibular disorders. They perform a full medical diagnostic evaluation of the head and neck, ears, and related structures, including a comprehensive history and physical examination, leading to a medical diagnosis and appropriate medical and surgical management. Often, a hearing or balance disorder is an indicator of, or related to, a medically treatable condition or an underlying systemic disease. Otolaryngologists work closely with other dedicated professionals, including physicians, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, educators, and others, in caring for patients with hearing, balance, voice, speech, developmental, and related disorders.

The otolaryngologist's evaluation includes a comprehensive history to identify the presence of risk factors for early-onset childhood permanent hearing loss, such as family history of hearing loss, having been admitted to the NICU for more than 5 days, and having received ECMO (see Appendix 2).[70,71]

A complete head and neck examination for craniofacial anomalies should document defects of the auricles, patency of the external ear canals, and status of the eardrum and middle-ear structures. Atypical findings on eye examination, including irises of 2 different colors or abnormal positioning of the eyes, may signal a syndrome that includes hearing loss. Congenital permanent conductive hearing loss may be associated with craniofacial anomalies that are seen in disorders such as Crouzon disease, Klippel-Feil syndrome, and Goldenhar syndrome.[72] The assessment of infants with these congenital anomalies should be coordinated with a clinical geneticist.

In large population studies, at least 50% of congenital hearing loss has been designated as hereditary, and nearly 600 syndromes and 125 genes associated with hearing loss have already been identified.[72,73] The evaluation, therefore, should include a review of family history of specific genetic disorders or syndromes, including genetic testing for gene mutations such as *GJB2* (connexin-26), and syndromes commonly associated with early-onset childhood sensorineural hearing loss[72,74–76] (Appendix 2). As the widespread use of newly developed conjugate vaccines decreases the prevalence of infectious etiologies such as measles, mumps, rubella, *H influenzae* type b, and childhood meningitis, the percentage of each successive cohort of early-onset hearing loss attributable to genetic etiologies can be expected to increase, prompting recommendations for early genetic evaluations. Approximately 30% to 40% of children with hearing loss have associated disabilities, which can be of importance in patient management. The decision to obtain genetic testing depends on informed family choice in conjunction with standard confidentiality guidelines.[77]

In the absence of a genetic or established medical cause, a computed tomography scan of the temporal bones may be performed to identify cochlear abnormalities, such as Mondini deformity with an enlarged vestibular aqueduct, which have been associated with progressive hearing loss. Temporal bone imaging studies may also be used to assess potential candidacy for surgical intervention, including reconstruction, bone-anchored hearing aid, and cochlear implantation. Recent data have shown that some children with electrophysiologic evidence suggesting auditory neuropathy/dyssynchrony may have an absent or abnormal cochlear nerve that may be detected with MRI.[78]

Historically, an extensive battery of laboratory and radiographic studies was routinely recommended for newborn infants and children with newly diagnosed sensorineural hearing loss. However, emerging technologies for the diagnosis of genetic and infectious disorders have simplified the search for a definitive diagnosis, which obviates the need for costly diagnostic evaluations in some instances.[70,71,79]

If, after an initial evaluation, the etiology remains uncertain, an expanded multidisciplinary evaluation protocol including electrocardiography, urinalysis, testing for CMV, and further radiographic studies is indicated. The etiology of neonatal hearing loss, however, may remain uncertain in as many as 30% to 40% of children. Once hearing loss is confirmed, medical clearance for hearing aids and initiation of early intervention should not be delayed while this diagnostic evaluation is in process. Careful longitudinal monitoring to detect and promptly treat coexisting middle-ear effusions is an essential component of ongoing otologic management of these children.

Other Medical Specialists

The medical geneticist is responsible for the interpretation of family history data, the clinical evaluation and diagnosis of inherited disorders, the performance and assessment of genetic tests, and the provision of genetic counseling. Geneticists or genetic counselors are qualified to interpret the significance and limitations of new tests and to convey the current status of knowledge during genetic counseling. All families of children with confirmed hearing loss should be offered, and may benefit from, a genetics evaluation and counseling. This evaluation can provide families with information on etiology of hearing loss, prognosis for progression, associated disorders (eg, renal, vision, cardiac), and likelihood of recurrence in future offspring. This information may influence parents' decision-making regarding intervention options for their child.

Every infant with a confirmed hearing loss should have an evaluation by an ophthalmologist to document

visual acuity and rule out concomitant or late-onset vision disorders such as Usher syndrome.[1,80] Indicated referrals to other medical subspecialists, including developmental pediatricians, neurologists, cardiologists, and nephrologists, should be facilitated and coordinated by the primary health care professional.

Early Intervention

Before newborn hearing screening was instituted universally, children with severe-to-profound hearing loss, on average, completed the 12th grade with a 3rd- to 4th-grade reading level and language levels of a 9- to 10-year-old hearing child.[81] In contrast, infants and children with mild-to-profound hearing loss who are identified in the first 6 months of life and provided with immediate and appropriate intervention have significantly better outcomes than later-identified infants and children in vocabulary development,[82,83] receptive and expressive language,[12,84] syntax,[85] speech production,[13,86–88] and social-emotional development.[89] Children enrolled in early intervention within the first year of life have also been shown to have language development within the normal range of development at 5 years of age.[31,90]

Therefore, according to federal guidelines, once any degree of hearing loss is diagnosed in a child, a referral should be initiated to an early intervention program within 2 days of confirmation of hearing loss (CFR 303.321d). The initiation of early intervention services should begin as soon as possible after diagnosis of hearing loss but at no later than 6 months of age. Even when the hearing status is not determined to be the primary disability, the family and child should have access to intervention with a provider who is knowledgeable about hearing loss.[91]

UNHS programs have been instituted throughout the United States for the purpose of preventing the significant and negative effects of hearing loss on the cognitive, language, speech, auditory, social-emotional, and academic development of infants and children. To achieve this goal, hearing loss must be identified as quickly as possible after birth, and appropriate early intervention must be available to all families and infants with permanent hearing loss. Some programs have demonstrated that most children with hearing loss and no additional disabilities can achieve and maintain language development within the typical range of children who have normal hearing.[12,13,85,90] Because these studies were descriptive and not causal studies, the efficacy of specific components of intervention cannot be separated from the total provision of comprehensive services. Thus, the family-centered philosophy, the intensity of services, the experience and training of the provider, the method of communication, the curricula, the counseling procedures, the parent support and advocacy, and the deaf and hard-of-hearing support and advocacy are all variables with unknown effects on the overall outcomes of any individual child. The key component of providing quality services is the expertise of the provider specific to hearing loss. These services may be provided in the home, a center, or a combination of the 2 locations.

The term "intervention services" is used to describe any type of habilitative, rehabilitative, or educational program provided to children with hearing loss. In some cases of mild hearing losses, amplification technology may be the only service provided. Some parents choose only developmental assessment or occasional consultation, such as parents with infants who have unilateral hearing losses. Children with high-frequency losses and normal hearing in the low frequencies may only be seen by a speech-language pathologist, and those with significant bilateral sensorineural hearing losses might be seen by an educator of the deaf and receive additional services.

Principles of Early Intervention

To ensure informed decision-making, parents of infants with newly diagnosed hearing loss should be offered opportunities to interact with other families who have infants or children with hearing loss as well as adults and children who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, parents should also be offered access to professional, educational, and consumer organizations and provided with general information on child development, language development, and hearing loss. A number of principles and guidelines have been developed that offer a framework for quality early intervention service delivery systems for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.[92] Foundational characteristics of developing and implementing early intervention programs include a family-centered approach, culturally responsive practices, collaborative professional-family relationships and strong family involvement, developmentally appropriate practice, interdisciplinary assessment, and community-based provision of services.

Designated Point of Entry

States should develop a single point of entry into intervention specific for hearing impairment to ensure that, regardless of geographic location, all families who have infants or children with hearing loss receive information about a full range of options regarding amplification and technology, communication and intervention, and accessing appropriate counseling services. This state system, if separate from the state's Part C system, should integrate and partner with the state's Part C program. Parental consent must be obtained according to state and federal requirements to share the IFSP information with providers and transmit data to the state EHDI coordinator.

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