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The Power to Change Lives: Your Role in the Cochlear Implant Referral Process

Laura Lassen, Sr. Manager, Growth Channels

Learning Outcomes

- After this course, participants will be able to identify patients within their practice who may qualify for and benefit from a cochlear implant evaluation.
- After this course, participants will be able to explain how to utilize practical counseling strategies to provide accurate information to patients considering cochlear implants and answer common questions.
- After this course, participants will be able to describe how to implement a process for referring patients to support and resources.

Risks/Benefits

- The applicability and accuracy of the course content may vary by the clinical, geographical, and cultural context; you should evaluate the course accordingly.
- As healthcare is rapidly evolving, new findings may change the validity of the information presented in this course. Providers should always consult the latest research and guidelines from professional associations.
- The interventions discussed in this course may be limited in generalizability, requiring practitioners to consider specific individual and population factors.
- The course may not cover all possible risk factors, diagnostic methods, or treatment options, and complex cases may require additional considerations.
- Healthcare providers should apply cultural competence and sensitivity to ensure effective and respectful care based on their patients' diverse needs.
- Providers should always evaluate the limitations of diagnostic and screening tools, considering their potential for false results as well as any ethical implications.
- It is the responsibility of course participants to critically evaluate the evidence from multiple sources to guide professional practice.

Our Mission

We help people hear and be heard.

We **empower** people to connect with others and live a full life.

We **transform** the way people understand and treat hearing loss.

We **innovate** and bring to market a range of implantable hearing solutions that deliver a lifetime of hearing outcomes.



Cochlear™ Named Most Trustworthy Healthcare Company in the World



We are proud to announce that we have been named the number one most trustworthy company in the healthcare industry by Newsweek in its 2024 rankings of the **World's Most Trustworthy Companies!**

This prestigious recognition underscores Cochlear's unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and customer-centricity.



The Newsweek ranking was conducted independently in collaboration with global data research firm Statista and evaluated companies based on customer, investor, and employee trust.



Over 70,000 participants provided 269,000 evaluations, highlighting Cochlear's exceptional reputation and dedication to improving the lives of those with hearing loss.



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Introduction

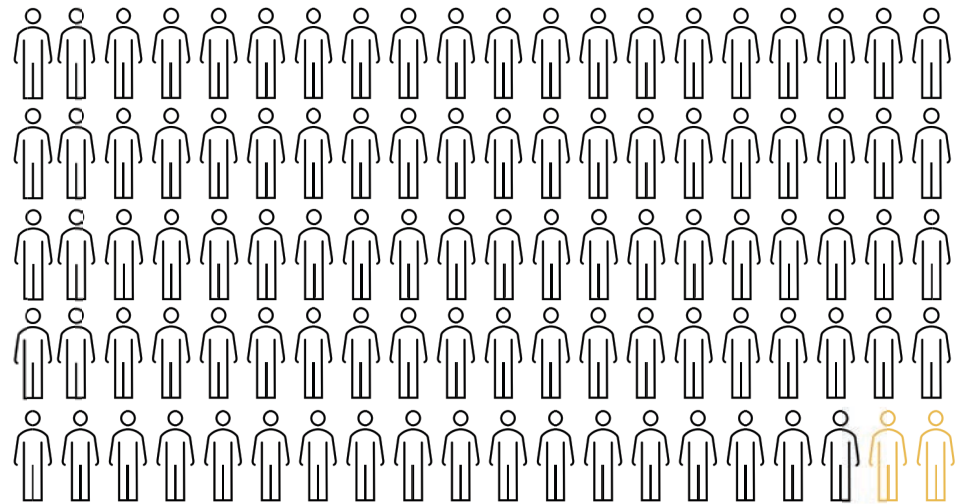
Establishing the Need

Conservative estimates suggest that globally

1 in 20 adults
who could benefit from a cochlear implant have one¹⁻⁴

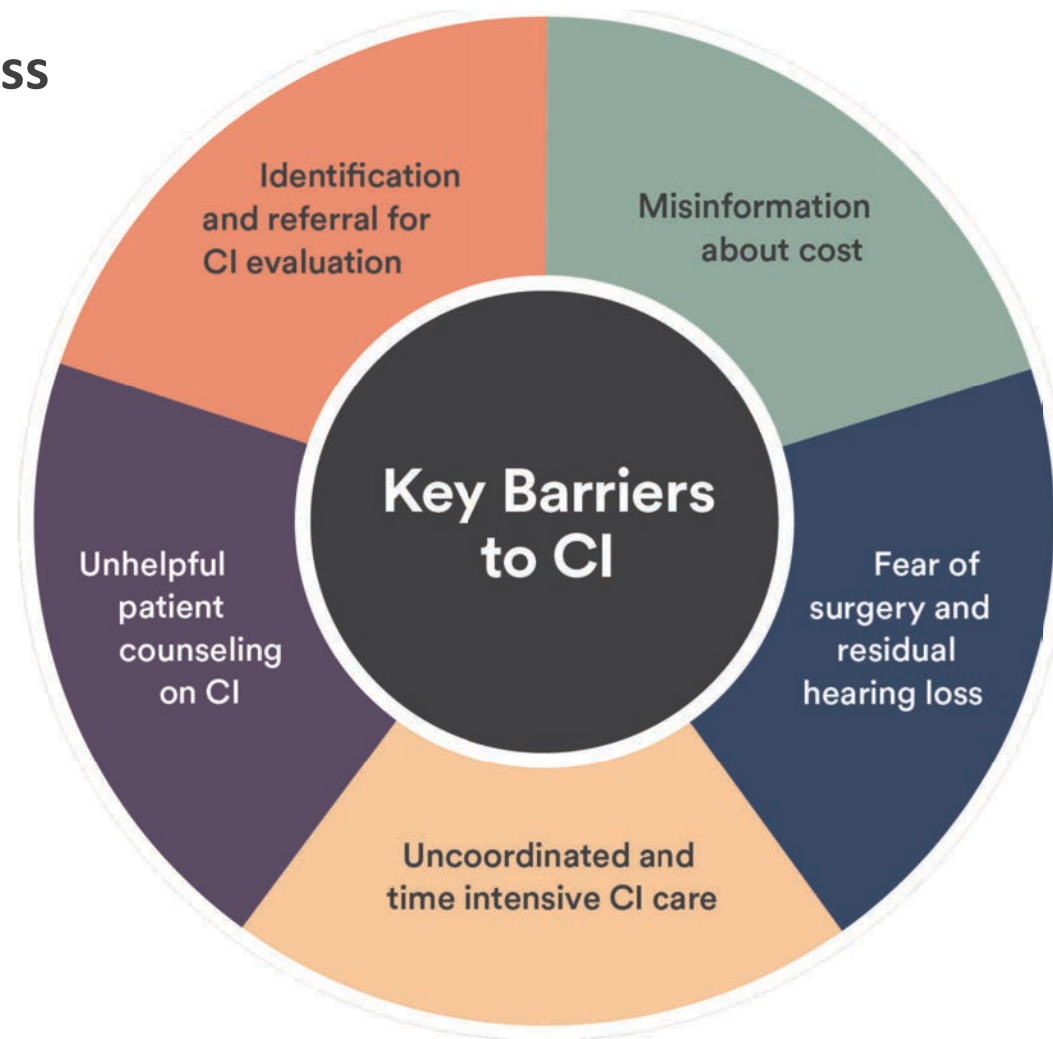


Nassiri et al⁵ reported that using a broadened criteria common today expands the potential CI candidate population to 8..05M individuals for a utilization rate of 2.1%



1. Craig A. Buchman, et al., Unilateral Cochlear Implants for Severe, Profound, or Moderate Sloping to Profound Bilateral Sensorineural Hearing Loss. A Systematic Review and Consensus Statements. JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. doi:10.1001/jamaoto.2020.0998 Published online August 27, 2020.
2. Adultheating.com, accessed 12/15/2022
3. World Health Organization. (2018). Addressing the rising prevalence of hearing loss. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/260336>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO
4. Mahboubi H. Gaps in evaluating, managing hearing difficulties. Hearing Journal 2018;71(3):6.
5. Nassiri AM, Sorkin DL, Carlson ML. Current Estimates of Cochlear Implant Utilization in the United States. Otol Neurotol. 2022 Jun 1;43(5):e558-e562. doi: 10.1097/MAO.0000000000003513. Epub 2022 Mar 8. PMID: 35261379.

Barriers to Access



Hearing Healthcare Professional Barriers¹

- My patients don't have enough hearing loss for a cochlear implant
- My patients are generally satisfied with hearing aids
- I don't have enough formal training to recommend cochlear implants
- My patients are too old for surgery



1. PSB Market Research, 2017 data on file

Think of a Patient...

*Despite
appropriately fit
hearing aids...*

Do they struggle on the phone with unfamiliar speakers?

Have they withdrawn from activities or social situations because they can't hear?

Does hearing loss negatively impact their employment or job opportunities?

Do they return frequently for hearing aid adjustments and still are not satisfied?



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Indications and Considerations for a Cochlear Implant Evaluation

Audiologic Evaluation vs Cochlear Implant Evaluation

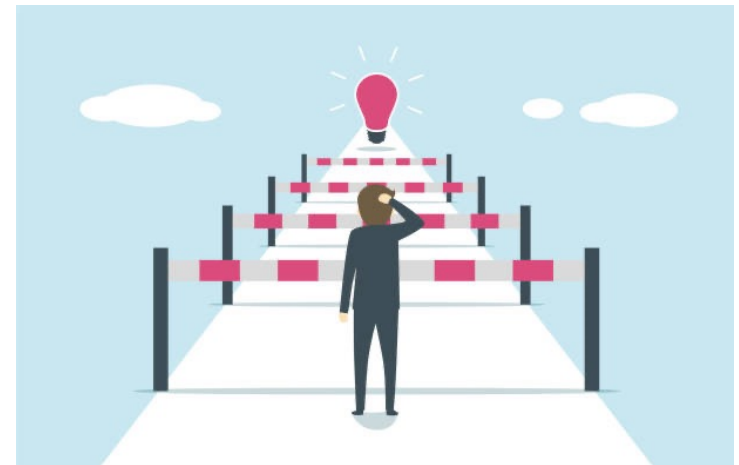
- In the United States, the standard of care for audiometric testing includes thresholds and **unaided word** recognition
- CI candidacy is based on the audiogram and **aided sentence** recognition
- Diagnostic audiologists rarely perform aided sentence recognition testing



So how *would* clinicians know when to refer?



When clinicians would ask us this, we weren't sure what to say



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When to Consider a Cochlear Implant Evaluation in Adults

Audibility: Pure Tone Average (500, 1000, 2000 Hz)

Speech understanding: Unaided Word Recognition Score

6 greater than
or equal to
60dB¹
in the better
ear



6 less than
or equal to
60%¹
in the better
ear

**Patient experiences
ANY of the following:**

- ☐ Struggles to hear on the phone
- ☐ Has difficulty understanding others
- ☐ Withdraws from social events
- ☐ Often needs others to repeat themselves

Zwolan TA, Schwartz-Leyzac KC, Pleasant T. Development of a 60/60 guideline for referring adults for a traditional Cochlear implant candidacy evaluation. Otol Neurotol 2020;41:895–90

Benefits of Earlier Implantation

Shorter duration of severe to profound hearing loss in the implanted ear was shown to be a predictor of better hearing outcomes¹

Reduced social isolation²

Significant improvement in overall hearing-specific quality of life in adults with bilateral, severe, profound, or moderate sloping to profound hearing loss³

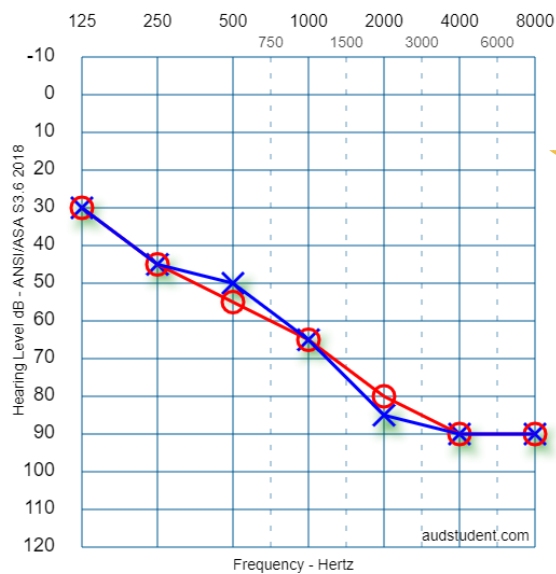
Better hearing outcomes correlated with duration of hearing loss, speech understanding before cochlear implantation and the amount of residual hearing⁵

1. Plant K, McDermott H, van Hoesel R, Dawson P, Cowan R. Factors Predicting Postoperative Unilateral and Bilateral Speech Recognition in Adult Cochlear Implant Recipients with Acoustic Hearing. *Ear Hear.* 2016 Mar-Apr;37(2):153-63. doi: 10.1097/AUD.0000000000000233. PMID: 26462170.
2. Castiglione A, Benatti A, Velardita C, Favaro D, Padoan E, Severi D, Pagliaro M, Bovo R, Vallesi A, Gabelli C, Martini A. Aging, Cognitive Decline and Hearing Loss: Effects of Auditory Rehabilitation and Training with Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants on Cognitive Function and Depression among Older Adults. *Audiol Neurotol.* 2016;21 Suppl 1:21-28. doi: 10.1159/000448350. Epub 2016 Nov 3. PMID: 27806352.
3. Buchman CA, Gifford RH, Haynes DS, Lenarz T, O'Donoghue G, Adunka O, Biever A, Briggs RJ, Carlson ML, Dai P, Driscoll CL, Francis HW, Gantz BJ, Gurgel RK, Hansen MR, Holcomb M, Karltorp E, Kirtane M, Larky J, Mylanus EAM, Roland JT Jr, Saeed SR, Skarzynski H, Skarzynski PH, Syms M, Teagle H, Van de Heyning PH, Vincent C, Wu H, Yamasoba T, Zwolan T. Unilateral Cochlear Implants for Severe, Profound, or Moderate Sloping to Profound Bilateral Sensorineural Hearing Loss: A Systematic Review and Consensus Statements. *JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2020 Oct 1;146(10):942-953. doi: 10.1001/jamaoto.2020.0998. PMID: 32857157.
4. Derinsu U, Yüksel M, Geçici CR, Çiprut A, Akdeniz E. Effects of residual speech and auditory deprivation on speech perception of adult cochlear implant recipients. *Auris Nasus Larynx.* 2019 Feb;46(1):58-63. doi: 10.1016/j.anl.2018.06.006. Epub 2018 Jun 23. PMID: 29945747.

Said Another Way¹

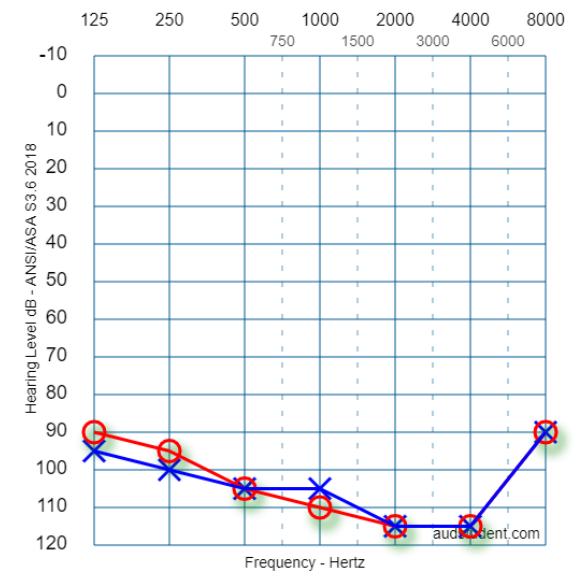


Patient A



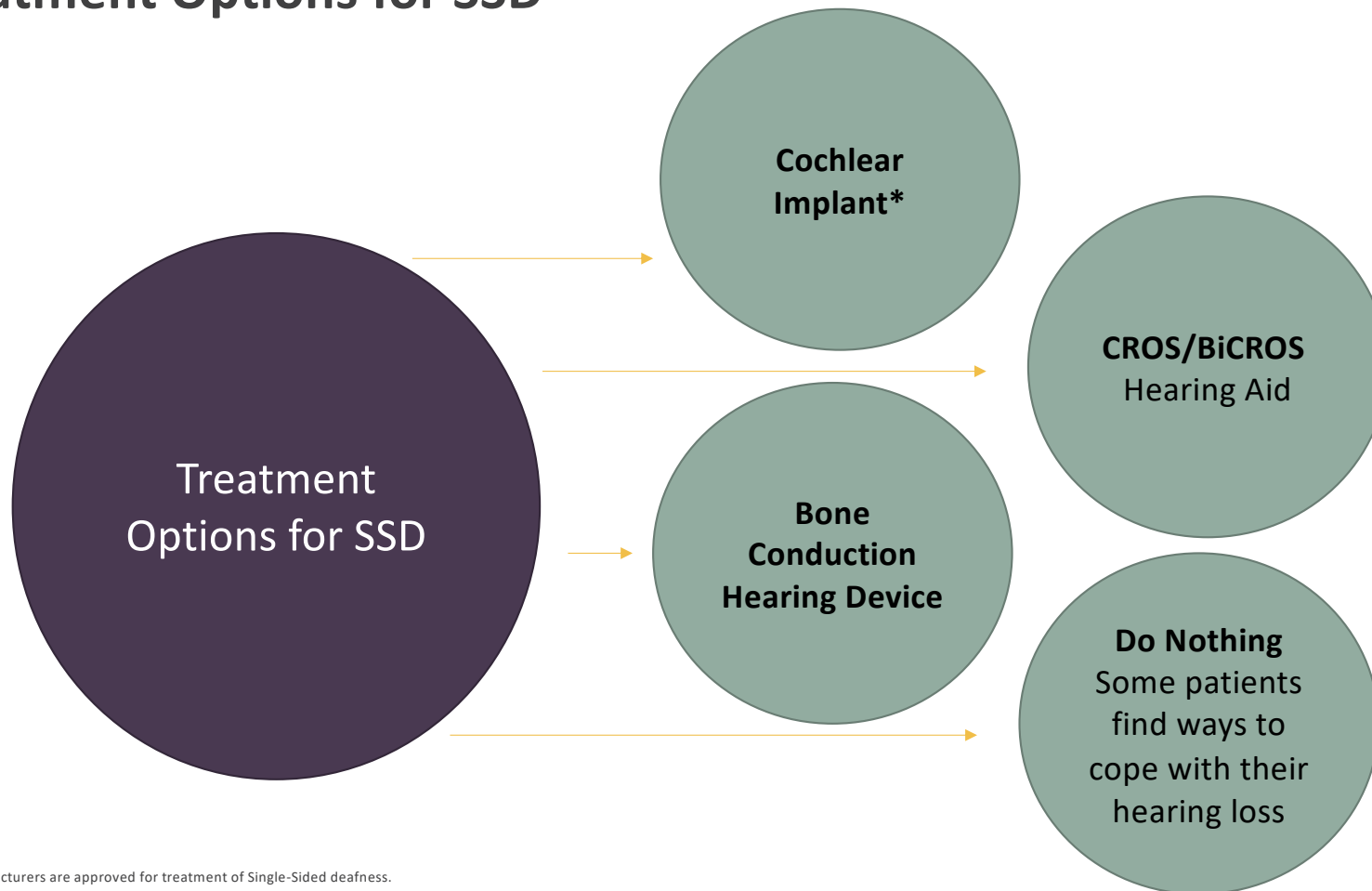
**Patient A
may do
better than
Patient B**

Patient B



1. Dowell RC. The case for earlier cochlear implantation in postlingually deaf adults. Int J Audiol. 2016;55 Suppl 2:S51-6. doi: 10.3109/14992027.2015.1128125. Epub 2016 Feb 26. PMID: 26918896.

Treatment Options for SSD



* Not all Manufacturers are approved for treatment of Single-Sided deafness.

When to consider a hearing implant evaluation for single sided deafness (SSD)

Does your patient meet any of these criteria?



	 Poor ear	 Good ear	Age	Daily interactions ^{1,2}
Cochlear implant Pure Tone Average (AC @ 500, 1000, 2000, 4000 Hz)	greater than 80 dB HL	less than or equal to 30 dB HL	5 years and older	Patient experiences ANY of the following: ☐ Unhappy with hearing aids ☐ Has tinnitus with hearing loss ☐ Favors one ear ☐ Struggles localizing sounds ☐ Withdraws from social events ☐ Often needs others to repeat themselves
Bone conduction Pure Tone Average (AC @ 500, 1000, 2000, 3000 Hz)	greater than or equal to 80 dB HL	less than or equal to 20 dB HL	surgical: 5 years and older non-surgical: any age	

* This provides a recommendation only of when to refer for a cochlear implant or bone conduction evaluation, but does not guarantee candidacy based on indications. For more information on candidacy criteria, please visit <https://www.cochlear.com/us/en/home/diagnosis-and-treatment/how-cochlear-solutions-work>

1. Firszt JB, Reeder RM, Holden LK, Dwyer NY. Asymmetric Hearing Study T. Results in adult cochlear implant recipients with varied asymmetric hearing: a prospective longitudinal study of speech recognition, localization, and participant report. Ear Hear 2018;39:845–862.

2. Alhanbali, S., Dawes, P., Lloyd, S., & Munro, K. J. (2017). Self-Reported Listening-Related Effort and Fatigue in Hearing-Impaired Adults. Ear and Hearing, 38(1), e39–e48. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AUD.0000000000000361>.

This material is intended for health professionals.



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Scan to learn more about when to refer

www.cochlear.us/SSD

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Navigating the Counseling Conversation

Common Candidate Questions

- Would a stronger hearing aid work for me?
- Am I too old for a cochlear implant?
- My hearing aids are at least doing something for me – why would I give that up for a cochlear implant?
- I don't think surgery is necessary – isn't it better to just wait?
- What would a cochlear implant do for me?
- What if I lose my hearing?



Helpful things to consider when talking with your patients

Inform

Inform them you have done everything you can to maximize their hearing with hearing aids

Introduce

Introduce cochlear implants as a potential option when hearing aids are no longer enough

Encourage

Encourage patients to attend a CI meeting with other prospective candidates or recipients

Evaluate

Note that the goal of a CI evaluation is to determine possible next steps so that the patient can make an informed decision

Counseling Patients¹

Change is hard

You are your
patient's trusted
advisor

Patients need you
to be confident

What you say (and
how you say it)
matters!

You're
recommending an
evaluation, not
surgery

Patients get to
decide their own
path

You don't have to
have all the
answers, more will
come at the CICE.

How to **Counsel** Hearing Aid Users
About Their Prospective Candidacy
for a **Cochlear Implant**



By Terry Zwolan, Ph.D.

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The Referral Journey: A Patient's Perspective

Kelly Flodin

With bilateral cochlear implants for over five years, I'm passionate about CI advocacy and regularly participate in research as a willing "guinea pig" to help advance the technology. I thrive on connecting with fellow CI users and candidates, sharing experiences, and building community.

Professionally, I work with my hands—welding, fabricating, and repairing machinery. Outside of work, I restore old trucks and hot rods, play guitar, and enjoy the outdoors through hunting and fishing.

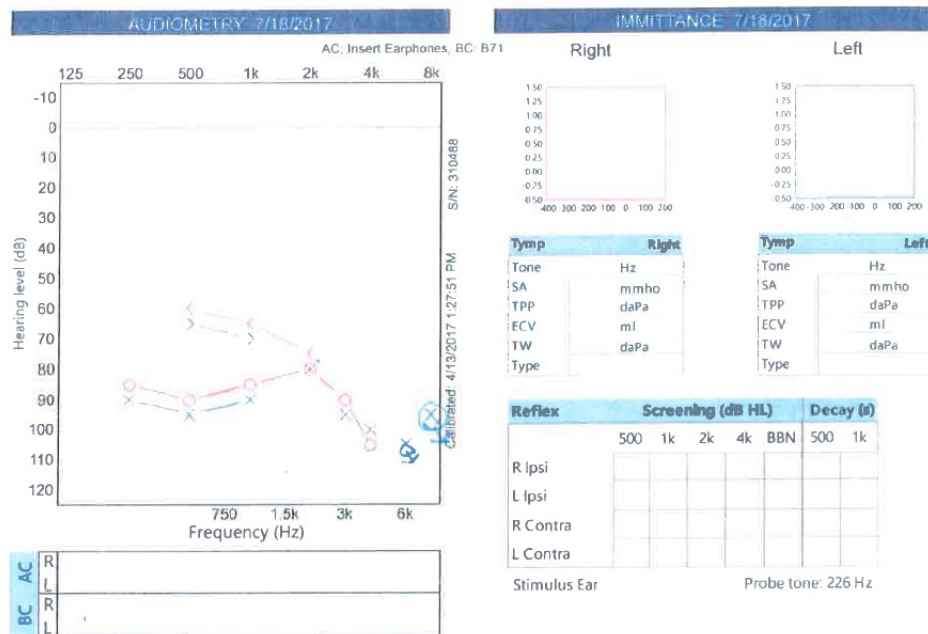


Audiogram 2017

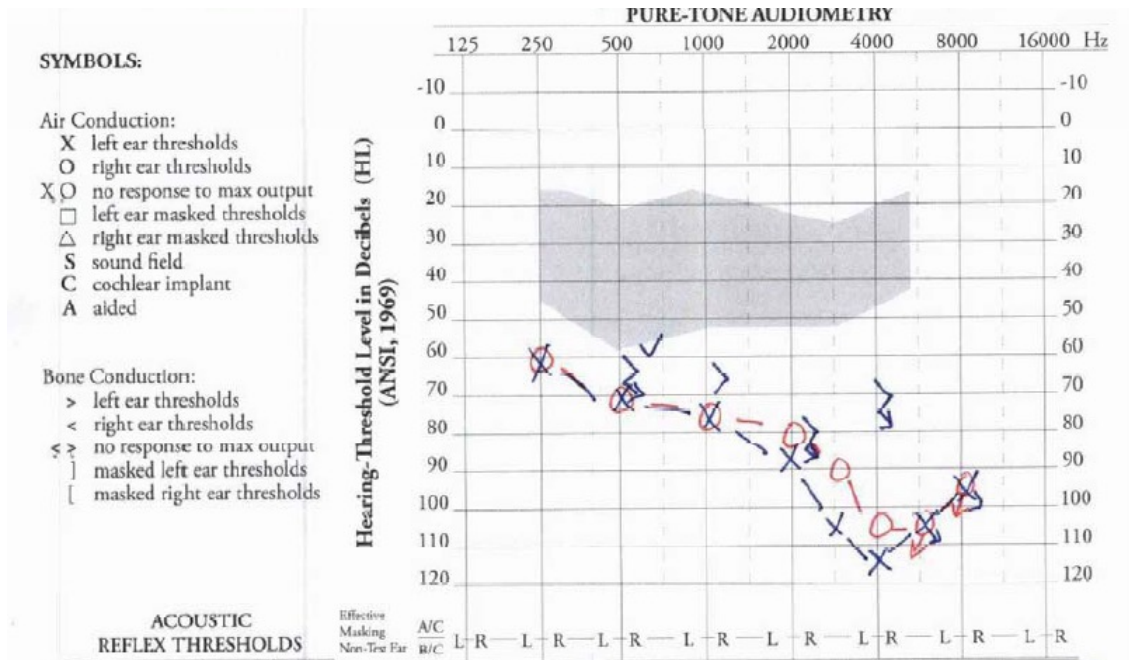


Report Comments

unable to obtain speech scores
with live voice - distorted & not intelligible



Audiogram 2020-Initial referral to CI Center



SPEECH AUDIOMETRY

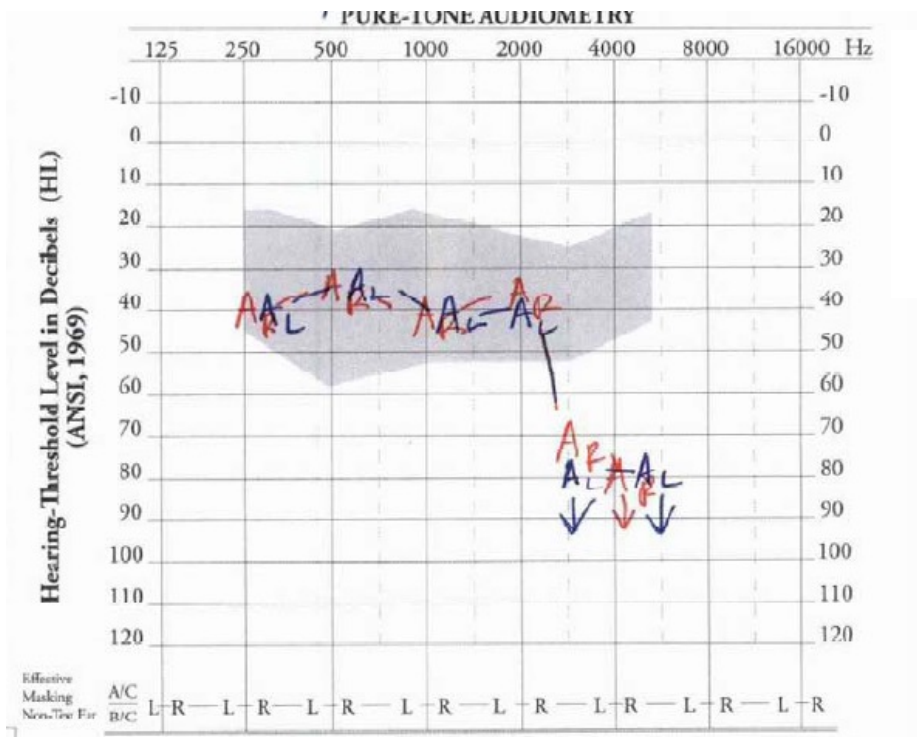
MLV/REC

	Right	Intensity	Left	Intensity	Masking	Test
SRT	75	dB	80	dB	L	R
WRS	20	%	32	%	L	R
		dB		dB	L	R
		dB		dB	L	R

CNC

Comments: NR tested at MCL: 100 dB HL distorted / painful

Aided thresholds & CIE Evaluation results-2020



Evaluation

Prior audiologic testing 6/12/2020

Test	List #	Right Aided	List #	Left Aided
CNC- Words	7	28%	1	24%
CNC- Phonemes	7	42%	1	44%
AzBio Sentences- Quiet	18	33%	13	24%

1 Month Post Activation Results

Left 1 month post activation

Functional Gain Audiometry: Ear specific cochlear implant testing was completed in a calibrated sound field using warbled tone and conventional audiometry. The following results were obtained in dB HL with good reliability:

Implanted Ear	Map #	250 Hz	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz	6000 Hz	SRT
Left	8	25	25	35	20	35	25	20	25

		Left CI		Bimodal
Test	List #	Score	List #	Score
CNC- Words	7	70%	DNT	DNT
CNC- Phonemes	7	86%	DNT	DNT
AzBio Sentences- Quiet	27	90%	DNT	DNT
AzBio Sentences- +10 SNR	29	54%	24	80%
AzBio Sentences- +5 SNR	DNT	DNT	DNT	DNT
AzBio Sentences- 0 SNR	DNT	DNT	DNT	DNT

3 Month Post Activation

Implanted Ear	Map #	250 Hz	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz	6000 Hz	SRT
Left	11	25	20	30	20	30	30	20	25

		Left CI		Bimodal
Test	List #	Score	List #	Score
CNC- Words	9	90%	DNT	DNT
CNC- Phonemes	9	96%	DNT	DNT
AzBio Sentences- Quiet	11	95%	DNT	DNT
AzBio Sentences- +10 SNR	14	80%		
AzBio Sentences- +5 SNR	18	51%	DNT	DNT
AzBio Sentences- 0 SNR	DNT	DNT	DNT	DNT

Most Recent Results (2023) after Implantation of Right Ear

Implanted Ear	Map #	250 Hz	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz	4000 Hz	6000 Hz	SRT
Right	61 (900 pps)	25	30	30	25	35	30	25	DNT
Left	27 (900 pps)	25	30	25	20	30	30	25	DNT

Test	List #	CI Right	List #	CI Left
CNC- Words	10	84%	3	92%
CNC- Phonemes	10	94%	3	97%
AzBio Sentences- Quiet	2	96%	29	95%
AzBio Sentences- +10 SNR	18	86%	6	86%
AzBio Sentences- +5 SNR	11	57%	15	35%

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Resources and Next Steps

You don't need all the answers.

- Refer patients to Cochlear for assistance
- Collateral available for your office
- Connect patients with mentors
- Meet one-on-one for professional assistance

Cochlear Americas
Connect with a mentor

Considering a Cochlear hearing solution?
Get your questions answered by someone who has first-hand experience with hearing loss.

There is a large community of recipient volunteers and loved ones available to share their story and who want to support you in your journey to better hearing. Find out what life is like today for those who chose a Cochlear hearing solution for their hearing loss.

Connect with a mentor via email: mentor@cochlear.com

Connect with a mentor on Facebook: [cochlear.us/mentorgroup](https://www.facebook.com/cochlear.us/mentorgroup)



Cochlear
Your new best friend

Laura Lassen
Sr. Manager Growth Channels
720.619.4242
lassen@cochlear.com

Looking to gain confidence with cochlear implant referral guidelines and resources?

Connect with me to learn about any of the following topics:

- Current hearing implant referral criteria guidelines
- Overview of educational hearing implant resources
- Locations that specialize in implantable hearing solutions

Schedule a free virtual appointment with me today.

Email me today at: lassen@cochlear.com

Appointment date: _____

Appointment time: _____

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#CochlearUnited2025
PROMOTED 01/21

Make a referral. Make a difference.

Referring your patient for a cochlear implant evaluation

Connect

- A Concierge team member will reach out by phone to the patient within 72 hours to discuss an evaluation
- If phone communication is difficult, the patient will receive a follow-up email

Evaluate

- The specialist will ask questions regarding overall hearing health history
- Testing will be performed with and without hearing aids
- Treatment options based on results will be discussed in depth
- Most insurance companies will cover the evaluation costs

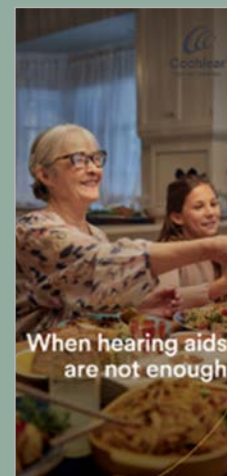
Educate

- Your concierge will offer additional educational resources if needed

Where to refer patients for a cochlear implant evaluation

Scan the QR code or visit www.cochlear.us/referrals to connect your patient with a concierge who will guide them through the evaluation process.

If you are seeking additional training on the latest in candidacy or have specific questions as a patient prior to the decision, contact our Market Expansion team at amem@cochlear.com.

Support for professionals to connect patients

Make a referral. Make a difference.

Cochlear®

Referring your patient for a cochlear implant evaluation



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Educate

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Where to refer patients for a cochlear implant evaluation



Scan the QR code or visit www.cochlear.us/referralsflyer to connect your patient with a concierge who will guide them through the evaluation process.

If you are seeking additional training on the latest in candidacy or have specific questions on a patient you'd like to discuss, contact our Market Expansion team at amem@cochlear.com.

I acknowledge that I have received my patient's authorization to share his/her contact information with Cochlear Limited and/or its subsidiaries and affiliates for purposes of contacting my patient about cochlear implant technology.





Connect

- Your Concierge team member will reach out by phone to the patient within 72 hours to discuss an evaluation
- If phone communication is difficult, the patient will receive a follow-up email



Evaluate

- The specialist will ask questions regarding overall hearing health history
- Testing will be performed with and without hearing aids
- Treatment options based on results will be discussed in depth
- Most insurance companies will cover the evaluation costs



Educate

- Your concierge will offer additional educational resources if needed

Support for professionals to connect patients

Patient referral

Complete this form to refer a patient or their carer to Cochlear. The Cochlear support team will contact your patient (or patient's carer) to provide information about hearing implant technology. By completing this form, you acknowledge that you have explained to the patient that you are sharing their name, contact details and health information with Cochlear for the purpose of helping them explore hearing implant technology.

Who is this for?

Who should we contact?

- ☐ Adult patient
- ☐ Carer or representative of the patient

Send request >

**Make a referral.
Make a difference.**



Scan the QR code or visit **cochlear.us/referralppt** to connect your patient with a concierge who will guide them through the evaluation process.

First name

Last name

Email

Mobile phone

Country code

Area code and number

Country

Post / Zip code

Patient's hearing loss experience

Which of the following best describes their current situation?

☐ Looking for help to improve hearing

☐ Looking for a hearing professional to help understand treatment options

☐ Have a hearing loss diagnosis and now researching treatment options

☐ Have a treatment option and now researching brands

☐ Booked for surgery

1

Provide your patient's contact information

2

Tell us about their hearing loss

Hearing professional's information

Your first name

Your last name

Your email

Work mobile phone

Country code

Area code and number

My profession is

Clinic or organization name

Work zip code

Preferred CI center/surgeon

I confirm that I have received permission from my patient or their carer to provide their personal and health information to Cochlear for the purpose of understanding more about implantable hearing solutions and that their information will be processed in accordance with Cochlear's [Privacy Notice](#)

As the referring professional, by providing my details, I agree that Cochlear may use these details to communicate with me and provide me with information about Cochlear's products and services in accordance with Cochlear's [Privacy Notice](#)

[Send request >](#)

3

Share your professional information

4

Let us know if you have a preferred center

What happens next?



1

Your patient will receive a phone call within 72 hours along with an email. They can respond to either in order to connect for more information.



2

Our Concierge team member will help them identify a local center for an evaluation and provide assistance on how to schedule.



3

The Cochlear Team will follow-up to answer questions and help provide more information if they qualify for an implantable solution.





THANK YOU

Contact us at: AMEM@cochlear.com for more information, resource requests or to connect with area CI centers



www.cochlear.com

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