

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Work Activity in Patients Treated With Cochlear Implants[☆]



Alicia Huarte, Marta Martínez-López,^{*} Raquel Manrique-Huarte, Sandra Erviti, Diego Calavia, Cora Alonso, Manuel Manrique

Departamento de Otorrinolaringología, Clínica Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

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KEYWORDS

Cochlear implant;
Job satisfaction;
Questionnaire

Abstract

Introduction: The aim of this study was to determine the impact that the cochlear implant (CI) had in the working life of individuals implanted, using the first version of a questionnaire developed in the cochlear implant program at the University Clinic of Navarre. Its purpose was to demonstrate that the CI significantly affected the working lives of these patients.

Material and methods: This was a retrospective study on a population of 60 patients (mean age, 48 years old) with bilateral profound sensorineural hearing loss treated with CI and to whom a questionnaire on working life satisfaction was given.

Results: Of the patients completing the questionnaire, 94.23% were currently satisfied at work. Almost all of them (93.05%) were more motivated to go to work after the implantation. The majority (79.31%) considered themselves more competent after surgery and device activation. Social relations at work were considered to have improved after cochlear implantation by 67.23% of patients.

Conclusions: The CI provided positive support in the professional sphere as well as in social abilities by improving communication skills of implanted patients. The development of tools to assess the degree of job satisfaction of patients treated with a CI is of great interest.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Implante coclear;
Satisfacción laboral;
Cuestionario

Actividad laboral en pacientes tratados con implantes cocleares

Resumen

Introducción: El objetivo de este trabajo es conocer el impacto que el implante coclear (IC) tiene en la vida laboral de las personas implantadas, a través de una

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^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mmartinezl.2@unav.es (M. Martínez-López).

primera versión de un cuestionario elaborado en el programa de implantes cocleares de la Clínica Universidad de Navarra. Se pretende demostrar que el IC está teniendo un impacto significativo en la vida laboral de estos pacientes.

Material y métodos: Se estudia una población de 60 pacientes de 48 años de edad media, con hipoacusia neurosensorial profunda bilateral tratada con un IC, a la que se le presenta un cuestionario elaborado para evaluar su calidad de vida laboral con carácter retrospectivo.

Resultados: El 94,23% de los pacientes que completaron el cuestionario están actualmente satisfechos con su trabajo. El 93,05% se sienten más motivados para ir a trabajar tras su IC. Un 79,31% se consideran más competentes tras la cirugía y activación del dispositivo. Un 67,23% de los pacientes han mejorado sus relaciones interpersonales en el ámbito de trabajo tras la implantación coclear.

Conclusiones: El IC proporciona una ayuda positiva en la esfera profesional al igual que en las destrezas sociales al beneficiar la capacidad de comunicación de los pacientes implantados. El desarrollo de herramientas para evaluar el grado de satisfacción laboral de los pacientes tratados con un IC es de gran interés.

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Introduction

Adults with hearing loss generally have difficulties maintaining a normal, active working life. Moreover, if their profession entails very demanding communication skill needs (meetings, telephone work, a noisy work environment, etc.), or if their hearing loss affects both ears and is severe-profound, a significant number of these patients may have to adapt or change their job, reduce their working hours or even stop working; in the worst case scenario they might even be dismissed. Similarly, hearing loss of these characteristics might impede the sufferer's career development or their taking on greater responsibilities in the workplace.

A certain period of time after a cochlear implant (CI) has been placed, these adults can, to a greater or lesser extent, regain their hearing and improve communication with their environment.^{1,2} These benefits are likely to extend to the workplace, enabling a return to professional activities and even career progression.

At present there are many tools for measuring the outcomes of adults implanted with CI in different environments: spoken-word perception in situations of silence and noise, sound localisation, quality of life questionnaires, etc.^{3,4} However, our search of the literature identified only one study relating CI and occupation,⁵ to date there are no materials that examine the degree of satisfaction at work of this population group. We believe that this aspect is relevant, since information could be gathered on how adults implanted with CI are integrating in social and professional activities. This information would provide data of particular relevance for cost-benefit studies and ultimately reveal the impact that this treatment is having on society.

The aim of this study was to explore the impact of cochlear implants on the working life of adults with bilateral severe-profound hearing loss by the application of a first

version of a working life satisfaction questionnaire for patients implanted with an IC (WLSCI).

Material and Methods

Questionnaire on Working Life Satisfaction for Patients With Cochlear Implants (WLSCI)

Two types of questionnaire, "retrospective" and "prospective", were proposed to evaluate the level of working life satisfaction of patients implanted with CI. An early stage, the focus of this study, covered the creation of the first questionnaire, Retrospective Working Life Satisfaction Questionnaire for Patients with Cochlear Implants (WLSCI). This would comprise one part, to be completed from one year after activation of the CI. This study includes a first version of this questionnaire. The "prospective" questionnaire would be completed in a second phase and comprise 2 parts, one to be completed before implantation surgery, once the selection and guidance phase has ended, and the other to be completed a year after activation of the CI.

Subjects

A first evaluation of the rWLSCI retrospectively studies a group of patients who met the following inclusion criteria:

1. CI user, 18 years of age or over at the time of completing the questionnaire.
2. Patient with profound pre or post locutive hearing loss in both years.
3. At least 6 months' work experience.
4. Willing to take part in the study.

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