

Pediatric Hearing health care in Sweden – equalities and inequalities

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Background

Pediatric hearing loss can result in delays in language development and can affect social and cognitive development. Early hearing detection and intervention reduces those risks.

The National working group in hearing has a commission from the National Program Group of diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat to work for a knowledge-based management.

Aim

Our aim was to map inequalities between regions and give suggestions on what needs to be done in the further work for a knowledge-based management for pediatric hearing health care in Sweden.

Method

Both national and regional existing guidelines were reviewed. A survey was sent to eight regions in Sweden, four with and four without university hospital, to assess the current practice in pediatric audiology and compliance to national guidelines.

Result

We have found that there are inequalities between regions concerning hearing screening, diagnostics, and rehabilitation for children.

Discussion

Today not all children born in Sweden have access to the same level of hearing health care. There is a need for national guidelines for both screening, diagnostics, and habilitation for children with hearing loss. For early diagnosis and intervention all regions need to have the facilities and knowledge of adequate diagnostic methods.