

Auditory Processing Disorder: review of services in New Zealand



What we were asked to do

We were asked to review what Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) services were available in New Zealand, for children and young people (up to school leaving age), across the continuum from assessment and diagnosis to receiving supports. We were also asked to map funder responsibilities and service coverage, and look at evidence-based outcomes and benefits from interventions. We were asked to look at and comment on prevalence rates in the New Zealand context.

How we approached the project

We used a mixed methods process to gather and analyse, and test input and findings of this project. Due to the high level of sensitivity in the field this included a robust and inclusive stakeholder engagement process. Stakeholders included families of children with APD, researchers and academics, health professionals, District Health Boards, schools and advisors on deaf children, hearing aid suppliers, funders (our clients), support agencies (e.g. Foundation for the Deaf) and some equipment suppliers.

A selective literature review was undertaken and census statistics along with other international prevalence data was used to try and determine prevalence.

We analysed themes and developed recommendations to improve the services and supports delivered, based on the general consensus of the stakeholders.

Due to the sensitivities, we sought a full academic peer review of our report from a senior Professor in the field, from the University of Auckland.

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Our findings	<p>We found that there is no national or international consensus on a range of aspects of APD supports and processes including which battery of tests to use for diagnosis through to what assistive technology devices are best to use and in what settings. Service coverage in New Zealand, especially for assessment and diagnosis, is very poor. Due to this non-consensus and the resulting sporadic diagnosis due to poor service coverage, there are also differing opinions on the prevalence of APD.</p> <p>Due to this one of the key recommendations was the establishment of a cross-sector national and mixed stakeholder expert group to guide and advise on developments into the future.</p>
Read the final report	<p>www.srgexpert.com/publications.html</p>