



Media release

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A world first for Australian acoustic researchers

Federal government agency, Australian Hearing, has launched new research that will help children with auditory processing disorder. Its research arm, the National Acoustic Laboratories, has developed a new product for testing children's hearing.

The Listening in Spatialized Noise – Sentences Test (LiSN-S) is a world first and will be used internationally to assess the ability of children to understand speech when noise is arriving from different directions.

Minister for Human Services, Senator Joe Ludwig, said LiSN-S will detect hearing problems in children that are not picked up by standard hearing tests.

“This is a great outcome for children who are affected by auditory processing disorder, which is particularly detrimental to learning in the classroom.”

“LiSN-S is testament to Australia's ability to stay at the forefront of acoustic research.”

“Australian Hearing's research arm continues to find ways to improve methods for assessing, preventing and treating hearing loss.”

LiSN-S was developed by Dr Sharon Cameron and Professor Harvey Dillon at NAL, and licensed to Phonak Australia, a manufacturer of hearing instruments, for international distribution.

According to Prof Dillon, Research Director at NAL, understanding speech in competing noise is a problem commonly experienced by children with auditory processing disorders.

“Research has shown that children with auditory processing disorder have difficulty processing differences in the timing and loudness of signals arriving at the two ears in order to separate targeted sounds from background noise,” he said. “By measuring a child's speech understanding when noises arrive from different directions, clinicians can simulate real-life situations like noisy classrooms, in which hearing can be challenging for some children.”

LiSN-S, which uses a new way of testing children's auditory skills and is simple to administer, will be available via Phonak Australia this year.

The research was launched at the 2009 General Practitioners' Conference and Exhibition in Sydney prior to a keynote address by Prof Graeme Clark AC, inventor of the cochlear implant.

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