

Completed Research Projects With CDC-EHDI Funding

Health Utility Effects of Congenital Hearing Loss in Children - Arkansas Children's Hospital and Arkansas University for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, Arkansas

Principal Investigator: J Mick Tilford - MickJ@uams.edu

Background: To better understand the potential cost-effectiveness of newborn hearing screening programs, information is needed on the health utilities of children with hearing loss and their caregivers. Health utilities are preference-based measures of health-related quality of life that can be used to estimate quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) for use in cost-effectiveness analyses.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to assess methods for measuring the health utilities of children with hearing loss and their caregivers.

Methods: This project was conducted over a 2 year period by experienced investigators in the field of health economics and audiology. A representative sample of 100 Arkansas children who had congenital hearing loss and an absence of other conditions and their families were recruited. Primary caregivers completed the Health Utilities Index (HUI3) and other instruments to describe their and their children's preference-weighted health outcomes or health utilities.

Summary of Results: The project has been completed and initial findings have shown correspondence between scores from the HUI3 and the Quality of Well-Being (QWB) scale in describing health utilities of the affected children. However, the HUI3 has indicated more variation and sensitivity to change than the QWB scale. Both the scores of the child and the caregiver decreased as severity of hearing loss increased. None of the instruments provided evidence that scores increased as age of identification decreased. *(Updated 1/2007)*