



hearingloss.org

POSITION STATEMENT

International Standards of Care for Cochlear Implants

Synopsis: HLAA, the U.S. leader for advocacy for people with hearing loss, supports the adoption of international standards of care for the use of cochlear implants as outlined in the *International Consensus Paper on Adult Cochlear Implantation*.

Hearing loss is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide and is estimated to affect 466 million people according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO projections suggest that, unless action is taken, there will be 630 million people living with disabling hearing loss by the year 2030; with that number expected to grow to over 900 million by 2050.

Cochlear implants (CIs) are an effective medical treatment for many adults living with severe, profound, or moderate sloping to profound sensorineural hearing loss. However, conservative industry estimates suggest that no more than 1 in 20 adults who could benefit from a CI has one.

In many countries, adults do not have their hearing assessed as part of regular health checkups. Of those who receive hearing checks and are diagnosed with severe, profound, or moderate sloping to profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, few are referred to an appropriately qualified hearing specialist to examine whether an implantable hearing device is indicated as the most beneficial treatment option.

There is a need for international guidelines with well-defined eligibility criteria for CIs. HLAA supports the recommendations in the [*International Consensus Paper on Adult Cochlear Implantation*](#) to establish those standards.

HLAA supports individuals having full access to information to make informed decision about his or her hearing health care. People who no longer benefit from hearing aids should be referred for cochlear implant evaluation in order to make an informed decision about all the options.

Beyond the Standards of Care

The International Consensus Paper covers minimum standards of care. HLAA supports further study on bilateral cochlear implants as many adults have benefited from binaural implants and cochlear implants in single sided deafness. In addition, HLAA supports studies on aural rehabilitation after implantation. With most medical procedures, there are standards of after

care. HLAA wants to see aural rehabilitation practices put in place for as long as needed for someone to experience optimum benefit from cochlear implants.

For More Information

To read more about the standards of care for adult cochlear implantation and the 20 consensus statements, see the section on the HLAA website [here](#).

[Approved by the HLAA Board of Directors on November 6, 2020](#)