Infant Hearing Screening in Maternal and Child Health Centres Using Automated Otoacoustic Emission Screening Machines: A One-year Pilot Project

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The Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) of the Department of Health have been using the Distraction Test (DT) as the main tool for infant hearing screening. Recognising the limitations of the test, a one-year pilot project was conducted to investigate the feasibility of implementing Automated Otoacoustic Emission (AOAE) screening in MCHCs and to compare the performance of the two screening tools. We report here our experience of using the AOAE test and its performance in a group of 3,949 babies at 4 pilot MCHCs. Comparison is made with the performance of DT in another group of over 45,000 babies. The AOAE test, with a test-repeat rate of 9.2%, a screen-refer rate of 3.8% and a yield of 0.76 per 1,000 babies screened, was shown to be a superior test to the DT. We conclude that AOAE screening is a promising tool for universal infant hearing screening in Hong Kong. (HK J Paediatr (new series) 2004;9:118-125)

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