**"Extensification of Newborn Hearing Screening Practice as a Good Public Health Promotion Program"**

Congenital hearing loss is a common public health problem that occurs in 3/1000 live birth. Affected individuals may have normal brain development if early hearing rehabilitation is performed. These affected children may have normal hearing, speech, school and work performance if hearing rehabilitation is performed before the maturation of the hearing pathways. Congenital hearing loss is seen as unilateral or bilateral. Children that have bilateral congenital hearing loss cannot have normal hearing, speech and perception skills if they do not undergo early-stage hearing rehabilitation. These children require special education and lifelong care. It’s known that; in unilaterally affected children, the binaural hearing activity will not develop normally. That’s why these children fall behind their peers in school and work performance. As a result unilateral or bilateral congenital hearing loss is a social problem that should be intervened in early childhood.

In early childhood period, children with hearing loss have no alarm symptom other than speech and perceptional retardation. Therefore, lots of families do not take these children to the health care facility with suspicion of hearing loss. Considering all this, congenital hearing loss is very suitable for neonatal screening program because of incidence and social cost. In our country, Neonatal Hearing Screening Program has been implemented since 2008 under the leadership of the Ministry of Health. Currently today, 98% of newborn are screened under this program after birth in Turkey. In this way, children with unilateral or bilateral hearing loss are detected in early childhood period. These children take their place as normal individuals in the community with appropriate hearing rehabilitation.

We would like to cooperate with health institutions from Member States of European Union on the implementation of **Strategic Partnerships for Good Practices**, which is experienced in hearing screening methods and where hearing screening is carried out professionally. Within the scope cooperation; we would like to share the hearing screening methods and practice techniques, exchange ideas about newborn hearing screening and improve the screening programs. In the same way we are also planning to ensure and improve the newborn hearing screening program in Balkan Countries, which are our low project partner and have no hearing screening program. Thus we are planning to contribute to early detection and early rehabilitation of children with hearing loss in these countries. We want to establish cooperation with suitable institutions that may be our project partner.

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