

Implementation of the Sound Scouts App to assist wait list management throughout COVID-19 pandemic

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BACKGROUND

Waitlists for diagnostic Audiology grew extensively as a result of appointment cancellations during the Covid-19 pandemic. In conjunction with Telehealth, the Sound Scouts online hearing test application (developed by National Acoustics Laboratories) was introduced into the triage process at Barwon Audiology. The Audiology AHA used Sound Scouts to support children and parents whilst they waited for a face-to-face (F2F) audiology appointment.

AIM

To utilise Sound Scouts to screen hearing of patients between 5-12 years of age to assist with waiting list management and identify high priority referrals

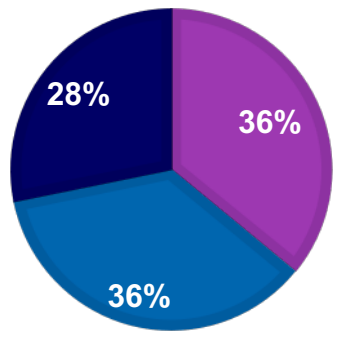


RESULTS

Of the 39 patients who accepted/used Sound Scouts, 36% (14) came in for F2F Audiology, 36% (14) were discharged following Sound Scouts pass and telehealth, and 28% (11) passed the hearing screen, but opted to stay on our waitlist until services resumed normally. Of the 14 patients who came in for F2F Audiology following a Sound Scouts result, 70% (10) had originally failed Sound Scouts, and 30% (3) of this 10 ended up not having normal hearing, and therefore were able to be prioritised as a result of completing the Sound Scouts screen.

DECISION FROM SS RESULT

■ F2F ■ DISCHARGE ■ Back on waitlist



CONCLUSION

The Sound Scouts App has proved to be a worthy addition to the triage process at Barwon Audiology, and is a valuable tool that can easily be encouraged within our ongoing Telehealth clinics, providing additional information about hearing status to our patients and their families. A pass result from the hearing screen provides our Audiologists, patients and their families a sense of reassurance for the interim, particularly whilst waiting for a F2F appointment. Furthermore, a borderline or fail result on the hearing screen allows for cases to be escalated as necessary.



FUTURE DIRECTION

Sound Scouts is now incorporated into the standard triage process at Barwon Audiology, as a means to gain further information about referrals, and to escalate cases who do not pass this online hearing screen. The Audiology AHA role in will be developed to support parents to accurately complete Sound Scouts with their child, and offer Telehealth support prior to discharge of children who pass the screen.