

soundscape

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND



Making a Difference

The death of Sir Edmund Hillary a few weeks back had me reflecting on the difference an individual and their actions can have on the lives of others. The hearing care profession is full of people who are going the extra mile to improve the lives of people with hearing impairment and their families, and the Oticon Foundation is delighted to help support their work.

It's that time of year again to apply for the Oticon Foundation grants. How can we help you make a difference to the lives of those people with hearing impairment? We need your application by 31 March. Check out how to apply on the back page.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to Trustees

Local Student Captures Attention of the Oticon Foundation, Denmark

University of Auckland PhD student Mike Sanders commitment and passion for a research career in the auditory sciences has captured the imagination of the Oticon Foundation in Denmark.

Mike has been awarded an Oticon Foundation scholarship from Denmark to help him pursue PhD research which puts the spotlight on the physiological and psychological mechanisms of background noise tolerance.

"An individual's tolerance of background noise is a strong predictor of whether hearing aids will be successful for that person, and conversely poor performance in background noise is often cited as a major reason for hearing aid rejection," says Mike.



Mike Sanders on a recent trip to Nepal for an audiology/ENT camp

"In every day life we often listen to one sound, like someone's voice in a background of competing sounds. To do this we must assign sound to the correct source and organise sounds over time – this is auditory scene analysis.

"Our ability to hear essential sounds or conversations in the clutter of background noise involves both auditory scene analysis and auditory selective attention," says Mike.

Mike's study looks at how this analysis and attention can account for individual differences in background noise tolerance.

"My PhD project will investigate the extent to which tolerance of background noise is determined by people's ability to categorise sounds, attend to the important signals and ignore those that aren't. I will be looking into these processes of auditory scene analysis and selective attention in young normal hearing adults."

University of Auckland Oticon Foundation in New Zealand Premier Award



The Oticon Foundation and University of Auckland are delighted to announce the award for original audiological

research work of outstanding quality in a Master of Audiology Degree.

Jeanie Morrison-Low has been awarded the 2006 premier audiology award for her work evaluating an auditory training

programme which actively engaged the attention of two groups of people suffering from high frequency hearing loss. One group had particular difficulties hearing in background noise; the other group suffered from the phantom perception of sound, or tinnitus. The results implied that active training which engages attention may be effective, using objective measures in a shorter time than some current, passive auditory training therapies aimed at alleviating tinnitus. For the group that had particular difficulties hearing speech in background noise, the study

showed that active training can positively alter individual "Acceptable Loudness Levels" (ANLs), which have previously been assumed to be fixed, and which are predictors of success in hearing aid use.

Congratulations Jeanie for this award and \$500 financial prize.

Past recipients include Maree Harper, Denise Farrington, Mike Sharp, Scott McLay, Julian Hinvest, Amy McLaughlin, Maria King, David Crowhen, Diem Mai and Michelle Pokorny.

Oticon Foundation Hearing News-In Brief

31 March Grant Deadlines

Get your application for Oticon Foundation financial support in to us by 31 March 2008. More information about criteria and how to apply is on www.oticon.org.nz.

Online Distance Learning

The Oticon Foundation internationally is backing the expansion of the FIRST YEARS online distance learning certificate programme for professionals working with children with hearing loss. Check out the programme run by the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at www.agbell.org or www.firstyears.org.

Newborn Screening Seminar

120 people attended the University of Auckland newborn screening symposium late last year. Professor Christie Yoshinaga-Itano presented:

- the 2007 position statement of the Joint Committee on Infant Screening (www.jcih.org/jcih2000.pdf);
- new clinical tool (VRISD) for assessing infant speech discrimination (<http://www.childes.cn/learning-data/dp/dp2-62.pdf>);
- the outcomes from the Colorado programme, with a mean age of detection of 2 months, and
- outlined how the UNHS programme operates in Colorado – which has small population spread over a large area.

Contact info@oticon.org.nz if you would like a copy of the video and/or a copy of slides.

Christine also took time to meet with key staff from the Ministries of Health and Education, with whom she is providing ongoing consultative support.

Dangerous Decibels – United States expert's message spread far and wide

A compelling case for starting young and educating early about the need to prevent hearing loss was heard far and wide, thanks to the whirlwind seminars of United States based Dr Billy Martin.

Dr Martin and the Dangerous Decibels programme were centre stage at seminars at the Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre at the University of Auckland, another in Wellington, meetings with Department of Labour and ACC officials, and a further seminar hosted by the University of Canterbury in Christchurch.

Recent debate and discussion about the impact of personalised music and sound systems like MP3 players and iPods made Dr Martin's talks topical and relevant.

Top this off with a lengthy and positive interview on National Radio's nine to noon programme and the challenge is there for New Zealand to do something now to prevent hearing loss amongst young people.



Inspired into Action

Two Auckland Registered Nurses with a keen interest in young people, hearing and hearing loss have been inspired to turn Dr Martin's talk into action in New Zealand.

Kahn Bury and Sarah Williams are working to develop a teaching kit for public health nurses in the Auckland region to use when they're in schools to educate young Kiwis about the risks of noise in relation to hearing loss.

Kahn can cite many examples of young people whose hearing has been further damaged from environmental noise.

"I've always been passionate about the impact of noise on young people's hearing and have grave concerns about noise damage from such items as ipods, MP3 players and boom boxes played in cars," says Kahn.

"However, if it wasn't for Billy Martin's very practical, easy and

sensible articulation of what they do in the United States we wouldn't have started developing the teaching kit," says Kahn.

The teaching kit will include simple, but effective ways of demonstrating the impact of noise on our young people's hearing.

Kahn and Sarah are seeking support from others interested in our young people's hearing. If you can help contact Kahn on kalebury@xtra.co.nz.

Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre

Mark your diaries for the University of Auckland's Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre research seminars.

9 April, 11 June, 6 August, 8 October.

Plans are underway for the Spring symposium in late 2008 focused on early intervention for children with hearing loss

Check an eye on www.health.auckland.ac.nz/audiology/OFHEC/ for more details about the seminars and any updates.

Life's a Circus

Behind closed doors in a large warehouse-style building on a recent hot and sunny Wellington Sunday a group of young deaf people was getting an experience never had before.

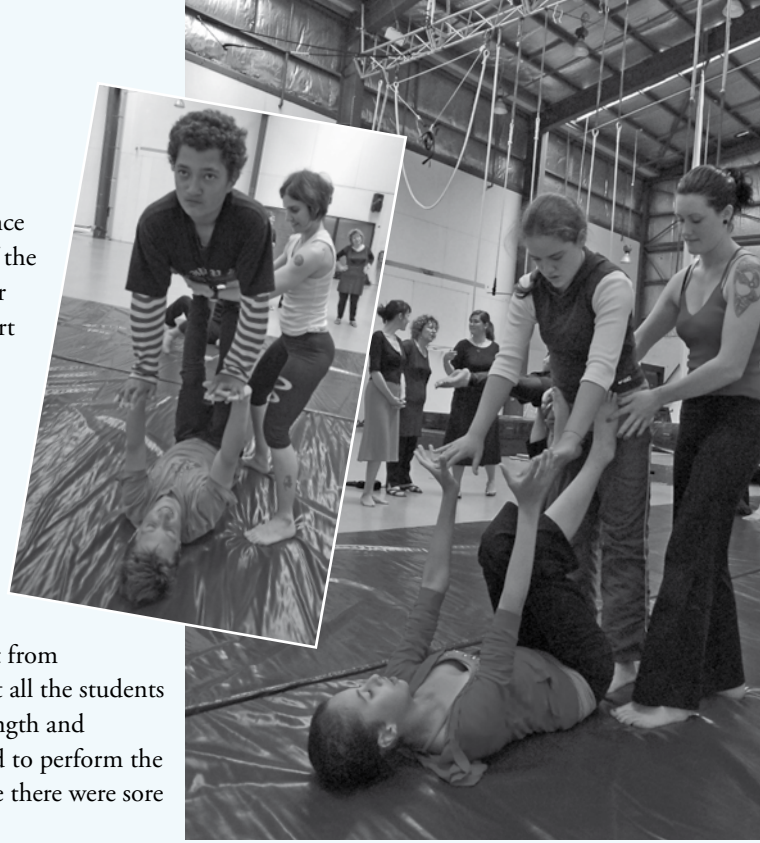
One look inside the metal door and it was clear something special was going on.

Ten young people plus sign language interpreters and circus performers were warming up for a workshop that would get them lifting, bending, walking on stilts, swinging on ropes, riding on unicycles, juggling and hula hooping.

This special circus workshop came about as a result of the young people attending the Circus Proms, a spectacular concert combining orchestral music and

stunning circus performance and thanks to the work of the Wellington Association for Deaf Children. The concert got the kids buzzing and wanting to know more.

The workshop wasn't only fun and challenging, but many had to grapple with balance issues created by hearing loss. There was laughter, frustration and a lot of exertion and effort from everyone involved. After it all the students really appreciated the strength and amount of practice needed to perform the circus skills. And of course there were sore muscles too!



Practical, Hands-on Experience with Vestibular Disorders at Canterbury

Helping the University of Canterbury provide students with solid hands-on experience to diagnose vestibular disorders – or dizziness and balance problems - is behind one of the latest Oticon Foundation grants.

Audiology students are now benefiting from the use of an Interacoustics

Videoculography System in the University's Vestibular Disorders Clinic.

“We've traditionally taught the theory side of our Vestibular Disorders courses in-house, but students' experience with this type of diagnosis equipment was limited to clinical placements at Christchurch Hospital,” says Dr Greg

O'Beirne, Senior Lecturer in Audiology.

“Having this equipment in our clinic greatly enhances the clinical education of our students and better equips them for practice in vestibular diagnosis.”

The equipment has allowed the establishment of a Vestibular Disorders Clinic which:

- provides students with hands-on training on the diagnosis of balance disorders
- gives students the ability to do Masters research in the vestibular system
- enhances the delivery of vestibular assessment services in Canterbury.

Dr O'Beirne expects that the provision of balance assessment services through the University clinic will also reduce pressure on Christchurch Hospital.



Students Gemma Caukwell (wearing the goggles) and Brenna (adjusting them) test out the new equipment).

Raising Awareness of Hearing Services

The Hearing Association in Kapiti is out and about in a very public way raising awareness of its services and how it can help people with hearing impairment. The Association is ensuring

the public don't miss them with this banner that now goes with them wherever they are. It's doing a great job raising awareness of the services available on the Kapiti Coast.



Oticon Foundation grant recipients 2008

HEARING ASSOCIATION, KAPITI BRANCH, for a banner promoting their services

HEARING ASSOCIATION, NELSON BRANCH, for hospital bedside notices for patients with hearing loss

KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE, for auditory verbal therapy and assessment materials

KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE, travel grant for Clint Green to attend the 2007 Conference for Educators of the Deaf, Hobart, Australia

KIM ROBINSON, to attend as a co-keynote speaker the 15th World Federation of Deaf Congress, Madrid, Spain

NEW ZEALAND AUDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY, for Dr Ros Davies, keynote speaker at 2007 NZAS Conference

NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC, to produce Otto Auditory Training CDs to be issued to families with hearing impaired children

PROJECT HIEDI, ongoing funding for the implementation of newborn hearing screening and early

intervention programme in New Zealand

THE WELLINGTON ASSOCIATION FOR DEAF CHILDREN, for deaf and hearing impaired children to attend the Circus Proms and offer the children the opportunity to participate in a Circus Skills Workshop

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, ongoing funding for Oticon Foundation Hearing Research Centre

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY, for research into the Prevalence of Hearing

loss in school aged children, and evaluate the usefulness of Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions (DPOAEs) as a screening tool

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY, equipment to establish a Vestibular Disorders Clinic

VICTORIA MANNING, to attend as a speaker the 15th World Federation of Deaf Congress, Madrid, Spain

how to apply for grants

Applications must include:

1. The name and address of applicant
2. If relevant, the organisation represented and position of applicant within the organisation, plus copies of latest balance sheet and annual report
3. Details of expenditure involved
4. Information about funding you are seeking from any other organisation for this or supplementary projects
5. Overseas travel details where applicable. Please state whether an applicant/s will be returning to New Zealand permanently after the visit is completed
6. How the hearing impaired in New Zealand will benefit from your project/research
7. Information about how you will publicise your project and its results. (We would like you to seek as wide an audience as possible)
8. Details about how you will promote the Oticon Foundation if your application is successful

Applicants applying for project funding should also include:

1. Title of project
2. Summary of project (not exceeding 150 words)
3. Qualifications of applicant relevant to project
4. Aims and design of project, and expected completion date

Applications for grants other than project funding should also include:

1. Details of grant requested
2. Reasons for request

Successful applicants will be required to:

1. Submit a report (five copies) within three months of completion of the project
2. Disseminate results or information from the project to as wide an audience as possible, such as to the bulletins and newsletters of professional groups, hearing impaired and Deaf groups
3. Acknowledge the Oticon Foundation in any reports or publications about your project/research

deadline

Grants are allocated annually.

Applications (together with five extra copies) should be made no later than 31 March in any year. Applicants will be notified whether their grant application has been accepted by 30 June of the same year. Please address applications to:

The Secretary
Oticon Foundation in New Zealand
C/- PO Box 9128, Te Aro
WELLINGTON
Phone: 0800 OTICON
E-mail: info@oticon.org.nz