

A Scoping Review to Highlight the Importance of Ear (Aural) and Auditory Health Under Comprehensive Primary Health Care in India

Sonali Kar¹, Angana Ray², Nirmalya Mohapatra², Gouri Kumar Rath²

¹Professor, ²Tutor, Department of Community Medicine, KIMS, KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Summary

Background: Despite representing a substantial public health burden in India, ear and hearing disorders remain a low-priority area within primary healthcare services. The National Health Mission's initiatives on Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) and Health and Wellness Centers provide an opportunity to integrate ear and aural health services. This review aims to map the evidence and policy interventions related to ear health in India's primary care system over the past two decades and identify opportunities for strengthening integration under CPHC. **Objectives:** The objective of the study was to map the evidence and policy interventions related to ear health within India's primary care framework and identify opportunities to enhance its integration under CPHC. **Materials and Methods:** A scoping review was conducted, including 19 studies and policy documents published between 1993 and 2025. Sources comprised peer-reviewed literature, program evaluations, and health policy frameworks. Data were extracted on study design, population characteristics, ear health focus, and relevance to primary healthcare delivery. **Results:** Ear problems, chronic suppurative otitis media, impacted cerumen, and hearing loss have been reported to be prevalent among children and older people in rural areas. Still, there exist large knowledge and service delivery gaps for ear health at the primary care level, which have resulted from a lack of equipment and professional human resources and low focus while offering these services. **Conclusion:** Blending ear and aural healthcare services under the primary healthcare setup of India will help to decrease preventable hearing impairments. Support and research are required for the integration of services under CPHC.

Key words: Aural health, comprehensive primary health care, chronic suppurative otitis media, ear health, hearing impairment, India, NHM, primary care, tele-otoscopy