Guest Editorial

Iowa International Hearing Aid Conference

Editor's Note: This entire issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Audiology is devoted to papers presented at the International Hearing Aid Conference, held in Iowa City in June of 1991. All papers have been peer reviewed by our editorial board, ably assisted by special ad hoc reviewers Jerry Punch, Aaron Thornton, and Chaslav Pavlovic. An introduction to the conference, prepared by the organizing committee, follows.

From June 21 to 23, 1991, an International Hearing Aid Conference was held in Iowa City, Iowa. We sought to organize a meeting on hearing aids where researchers and clinicians could exchange current theoretical and practical information. To foster this communication, we believed that an open-papers format, where the attendees were invited to present their own clinical and research activities, was more desirable than the more typical format where attendees listen to a small number of review papers by distinguished speakers. We were also aware of major differences in clinical protocols worldwide, and of the high quality of hearing-aid research being carried out in many countries.

Over 200 participants attended the Conference. They came from Brazil, Italy, United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, China, Australia, Canada, and the USA. Over 35 papers and 10 posters were presented during the 2-1/2 day meeting. There was a good deal of lively discussion, both at the conference and in more informal settings.

One important feature of the Conference was the tribute paid to our guest of honor, Denis Byrne. Many were able to get to know Denis on a personal level, affirming his commitment to the scientific investigation of hearing aids, as well as his somewhat dry, perhaps Australian, sense of humor.

After receiving a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Sydney in 1957, Denis gained experience as a clinical audiologist in Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, and Adelaide. From 1971 to 1987, he was the Audiologist-in-Charge of Hearing Aid research at the National Acoustics Laboratory, originally located near Sydney harbor. Denis would often spend his lunch hour providing unsolicited recommendations, at no charge, on acoustic matters during construction of the Sydney Opera House. Many have cited this as a significant factor to the escalation in cost from the projected $7,000,000 to the final cost of $102,000,000. City officials subsequently moved the National Acoustics Laboratory and Denis far away from Sydney harbor to their new quarters in Chatswood, where Denis became Research Director in 1987.

Denis is widely known as a careful, thorough researcher. He has investigated many aspects of hearing aid selection, fitting, and utilization. He has devoted 20 years of his life to contributing to the knowledge that helps the hearing impaired. His publications are scholarly, relevant, and numerous, and his contributions at scientific meetings are always valuable.

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