

THE SCREENED HEARING LOSS PROFILE AMONG LEARNERS  
IN THE RURAL SCHOOL-AGED POPULATION OF THE OR  
TAMBO DISTRICT IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH  
AFRICA

By

PINKIE DINAH GQIBA  
(191626074)

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Supervisor:  
Professor B. Longo – Mbenza

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## Abstract

**Background:** Hearing loss in the school-aged children is amongst the barriers that impact negatively on the child's cognitive, emotional, social and educational development if undetected and not attended to on time (Niskar, et al, 2011). Schools have been identified as an ideal environment where children's health and well-being can be addressed (Department of Health, 2011). Although there is a strong inter-departmental collaboration between the departments of, health and education, there is a paucity of the data reporting the mean age of diagnosis of hearing loss and the interventions implemented. This is partly due to limited systematic and/ or routine hearing screening programmes in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

**Aim:** This study intended to investigate the extent of hearing loss in the rural school-aged children of the OR Tambo District in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

**Methods:** A descriptive, retrospective, audit and document review of the data collected by the Audiologists of NMAH, when conducting hearing screening programme in the year 2013 was conducted. Data from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013 inclusive was selected and analyzed. Thus, 100% (n =832) subjects' records were selected for the purpose of this study. The general characteristics were obtained from 832 records of the rural school-aged children; and association between examination factors and age, gender and LSA were analysed.

**Results:** The majority of children (75% n=624) were aged 5 – 14 years, ¼ children (22.6% n=188) were with age = 15 – 23 years and 20(2.4% children were under 5 years). 368(44.2%) children were males while 464(55.8%) were females. A third of children (33.1%) failed hearing screening in all three examinations: otoscopic examination, tympanometric screening and pure tone audiometric screening (P-value

and examination (factors) LSA = other (MPN) had an even slightly larger odd ratio than that of LSA = (KSD). The ratio of these two odd ratios was found to be 6.24 and this revealed that, when LSA was "other" the odd ratio was more than six times than that of "KSD".

**Conclusion:** This study revealed a high degree of hearing loss in the rural school-aged population of the OR Tambo District in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa and is a representative of the current status in most developing countries. This could be the hearing loss that had developed during early childhood and never detected.

## Declaration

I, PINKIE DINAH GQIBA, Student Number 191626074 hereby declare that an investigation into **"THE HEARING LOSS PROFILE AMONG LEARNERS IN THE RURAL SCHOOL-AGED POPULATION OF THE OR TAMBO DISTRICT IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA"** which I submit for the degree of Masters in Public Health at Walter Sisulu University is my own work and all relevant references are shown in the reference list. This study has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university in order to obtain an academic qualification.

MASTERS CANDIDATE: PINKIE DINAH GQIBA

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR BENJAMIN LONGO – MBENZA

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_