



**Subject: Participation in Large Scale Data (LSD) experiment – Predicting and improving the outcomes of hearing rehabilitation**

Dear clinician,

I am seeking your help in collecting evidence regarding the success of hearing rehabilitation involving the fitting of hearing aids. NAL has recently received a grant from the six major hearing aid manufacturers to examine the relationship between information that can quickly and easily be collected during an assessment appointment, and the outcomes that are measured (by self report) approximately three months after fitting.

This is a very large-scale experiment, with the aim of collecting data on 10,000 clients to produce an accurate and comprehensive evidence base that relates outcomes to characteristics of the client, the devices provided (when fittings occur), characteristics of the clinicians, and the type and manner of services provided, all in a de-identified manner. It will be a first in hearing rehabilitation. Data will be provided by over 200 clinicians from the major hearing service provider organisations in Australia, including yours, and NAL will analyse all the data collected and disseminate the conclusions. An important aim of the project is to produce a software tool that predicts, as accurately as possible, the likely outcomes for individual clients based only on information that is evident at the assessment appointment. This tool will be made available to the industry at the conclusion of the project in 24 months' time.

What I would appreciate you doing is:

1. Taking a one-off survey that captures some of your beliefs, practices and experiences. Just log on to [LSD.NAL.gov.au](http://LSD.NAL.gov.au), take the survey, and you will be given a unique clinician number that we will know you by.
2. For each of 35 to 50 clients you see over the next 6 months, collecting and uploading to the NAL web site (or posting to NAL in paper form) specified information that you obtain during the assessment appointment (with the client's approval of course). To enter the information directly to the NAL web site, just log onto [LSD.NAL.gov.au](http://LSD.NAL.gov.au) and enter the data requested, which will include your clinician number and the client number. The information collected is all expected to be relevant to the likelihood of a client receiving benefits from hearing rehabilitation and you can print out the completed information for the client's file if you wish. Alternatively, you can enter the information onto a paper form, and send the completed forms to NAL.
3. Including any adult client who:
  - Has at least 23 dB HL (three frequency average) in at least one ear;
  - Has a hearing loss such that medical treatment would not be recommended;
  - Has sufficient cognitive ability to answer a simple questionnaire.
4. Advising those clients who choose to be fitted with hearing aids that in three months they will receive a questionnaire that you would appreciate them completing (on paper or on-line as they prefer) and returning to NAL.



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During the initial, anonymous survey you will be given a random personal identifier known only to you, and each time you upload a client's data, you will add to it your personal identifier. We are after frank information from both clinicians and clients, and it will not be possible for either NAL or your employer to connect your name to either the views you express on the questionnaire or the outcomes reported by any of your clients.

This project has the active support of your provider network. If you are able to help please start by taking the survey at [lsd.nal.gov.au/clinician](http://lsd.nal.gov.au/clinician), which will provide you with both your random identifier and instructions for how to upload client information.

The project has been approved by NAL's Human Research Ethics Committee.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Dillon'.

Harvey Dillon, Ph.D.  
Director, NAL  
Adjunct Professor, Macquarie University  
28 April, 2016