



## **BIAP recommendation n° 06/4 : Devices aimed at enhancing the communication capacity of individuals suffering from hearing disorders**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Recommendation 06/4 aims at grouping together the currently available technical devices used to enhance the communication capacity of people suffering from hearing impairments, in order to ensure that they will be used in the best possible way.

There are 3 main categories of devices:

- hearing aids
- devices used together with hearing aids
- autonomous devices

Hearing aids are active(1) devices. They are chosen and used according to specific principles and thus differ from conventional amplifiers.

The latter, whose response curve and dynamics are adapted to normal or subnormal hearing, may not substitute specific hearing aids.

Hearing aids have characteristics which must be adaptable to the individual anatomical, physiological, psychoacoustic and pathological characteristics of the ear and the patient's residual hearing capacity. This cannot be done with conventional amplifiers.

In addition to this, we should not forget the delicate adaptation procedure(2), which requires the presence of professionals who are not only technically competent but also have acquired a sufficient level of experience and know how to communicate with hearing-impaired patients. In one word, hearing aid audiologist.

Devices which can be combined with hearing aids allow the patient to use the device in specific settings (schools, universities, theatres, cinemas, conferences, churches, when watching TV or talking on the phone) and improve the signal/noise ratio.

Autonomous devices are used when the level of hearing loss does not require (some types of mild hearing loss) or allow (cophosis) the use of a hearing aid, or because the patient at certain times does not require the device (during sleep).

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