

Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of ENT & Audiology News Newsround.

This edition features exciting highlights from the Cochlear Implant International Community of Action congress and the ENT Masterclass® in Beijing, China. Congratulations to Professor Manohar Bance and his team for their groundbreaking gene

therapy trial, marking a new era in the treatment of hearing loss, and Nicholas Gibbins on his selection as the next President-Elect of The British Laryngological Association.

As always, we invite you to share any exciting news, previews, or event reports for our next edition. We look forward to hearing from you!

Haseem

CI Advocacy in Action: First Global Conference

9–10 May 2024 • Brussels, Belgium • Helen Cullington, University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service, UK.



Is this a world record for the most people with cochlear implants at a conference?!



Leo De Raeve, CIICA Chair, introduces Shelly Chadha, Technical Lead, Ear and Hearing Care at the World Health Organization.

I was lucky enough to go to the first ever global conference held by the Cochlear Implant International Community of Action (CIICA). The organisation's goal is to increase access to cochlear implants (CI) and ensure lifelong support for all who could benefit. And action there definitely was!

The conference took place over two gloriously sunny days in Brussels. I go to a lot of CI conferences, but this had such a different feel. There were around 100 participants and presenters from 27 different countries, and all were passionate about advocacy. There were two speakers from the World Health Organization, reflecting the body's firm commitment to hearing care worldwide, and a welcome video from Professor Graeme Clark.

I counted at least 36 people with cochlear implants, including one of the first people in Australia to have a CI, now celebrating 40 years of hearing. People with implants, parents of children with implants, academics, clinicians... all gave

presentations, and all were striving for the same goal.

Roberta Mandara, President of the European Association of Cochlear Implant Users (EURO-CIU), reminded us that at the current rate, it will take 570 years to implant all existing candidates. As well as hearing individual stories, we learned how to be the best advocates, about ethics, engaging with politicians, influencing policy and funding.

The conference was incredibly inclusive – the Sennheiser MobileConnect system meant everyone could tune into the audio stream. There was live captioning in English, French, Spanish, German and Dutch on screen, and an iPad option for other languages. Roger pens were also available. There was a 'talking wall' bursting with Post-its of questions, suggestions and comments.

At times I was laughing (eg. dating stories from Frances Gallimore); at times my eyes filled with tears (learning of people's struggles to get hearing care

for themselves or family members). A highlight for me was a global panel of young adults with CI from Brazil, Canada, India, Spain, and the UK. They received their implants as very young children (decided by their parents, of course) and are now emerging into the world as adults with cochlear implants.

I also loved hearing from Steve Kittuur about all the work he is doing in communities in Kenya in early-childhood hearing screening. He said: "In Africa, very little can go so far." It was humbling to hear what motivated individuals can achieve to change lives.

The conference dinner was a casual buffet supper at a neighbourhood Italian restaurant – we sat outside, moving from table to table, getting to know each other and figuring out how we can work together.

This conference felt important and inspiring to me. It has left me desperate to get stuck in and help in whatever way I can to make people's journey towards cochlear implants easier around the world.



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