

Caractériser l'expérience des personnes en situation de surdité selon l'approche de ceux et celles qui utilisent (ou non) les implants cochléaires, un projet financé par les IRSC

Stephanie Lloyd du Département d'anthropologie à l'Université Laval et ses collaborateurs à l'international sont heureux d'annoncer le lancement du projet interdisciplinaire « [Deafnesses: Reconfiguring expertise and reconsidering sensory experiences with/out the cochlear implant](#) » financé par les Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada (2024-29).

En collaboration avec les co-chercheuses Isabelle Boisvert (audiologiste, University of Sydney), Jennifer Campos (psychologue, University of Toronto), Michele Friedner (anthropologue, University of Chicago), Mara Mills (historienne, New York University) et les collaborateurs Katie Neal (audiologiste, University of Sydney), Emily Kecman (linguiste, Macquarie University), Chi Yhun Lo (linguiste, Toronto Metropolitan University) et Kelsey Anbuhl (neuroscientifique spécialisée en audition), la professeure Lloyd poursuit des travaux visant à mieux comprendre les formes d'expérience associées avec les implants cochléaires. Ce groupe de chercheurs en sciences humaines et sociales ainsi qu'en sciences de la vie a pour objectif d'étudier l'expérience des personnes en situation de surdité, tant dans leur vie quotidienne qu'en fonction de paramètres cliniques et neurophysiologiques. Ensemble l'équipe vise à proposer de nouvelles façons de comprendre « les surdités » qui se fondent sur le caractère expérientiel des personnes en situation de surdité et ainsi d'aller au-delà des limites propres aux approches disciplinaires.

Understanding experiences of “deafnesses” from the perspectives of people who use, or who no longer use, cochlear implants, funded by CIHR

Stephanie Lloyd, Department of Anthropology, Université Laval, and a team of international and interdisciplinary researchers launch the project “[Deafnesses: Reconfiguring expertise and reconsidering sensory experiences with/out the cochlear implant](#)” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2024-29).

With co-investigators Isabelle Boisvert (audiologist, University of Sydney), Jennifer Campos (psychologist, University of Toronto), Michele Friedner (anthropologist, University of Chicago), Mara Mills (historian, New York University) and collaborators Katie Neal (audiologist, University of Sydney), Emily Kecman (linguist, Macquarie University), Chi Yhun Lo (linguist, Toronto Metropolitan University) and Kelsey Anbuhl (auditory neuroscientist), Lloyd seeks new understandings of the experiences associated with cochlear implants. This group of researchers from the social sciences, humanities, and life sciences will trace the experiences of deaf people from their daily lives to the ways in which these experiences are described with clinical and neurophysiological measures. Together the team seeks to go beyond siloed explanations, to produce new understandings of “deafnesses”, anchored in the perspectives of deaf people.

Résumé du projet

Cochlear implants (CIs) are considered to be one of the first true bionic devices and are described as able to repair a “sensory deficit” by (re)creating hearing. Over the past two decades, CIs have become increasingly commonly used, with the result that many deaf people now hear. However, hearing with CIs is described in scientific literature as “impoverished” or “degraded.” This research has documented how CI users hear and process sound differently than typical (or, “normal”) hearers. For example, in the context of background noise or multiple speakers, they often rely on visual input such as lip reading to understand speech. Despite these known differences, therapeutic interventions nonetheless train people to mimic typical hearing behaviours, for example, by avoiding visual input as much as possible. When differences remain between people’s hearing with CIs and typical hearing, discrepancies are framed in terms of what ‘lacks’ in the sensory experiences of CI users.

In contrast to existing research, these differences will be our starting point to study experiences with CIs in their own right, rather than as an experience that can only be understood by what it lacks. We aim to gain insights into the specificity of hearing with CIs to (1) clarify what is currently unknown or unmeasured in CI research as it relates to the specific sensory experiences associated with the devices and (2) consider how experiences with CIs could be understood and possibly reshaped if the reproduction of typical hearing was not the primary, or sole, goal of interventions.

Overall, deaf people’s experiences will be central to this study and many of the lead researchers of this project are deaf, some of whom have CIs. The outcome of the project will be findings that go beyond conventional research on CIs to produce new understandings of the experience of living with CIs that will allow people to live better with the devices.