

# LISTEN UP!

## JOHANNESBURG COCHLEAR IMPLANT NEWS LETTER WINTER EDITION 2011

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW RECIPIENTS

Congratulations and good luck to our 2011 recipients implanted since our last newsletter in April 2011:

Adults: Jabulile Ngwenya; Marina Willemse (2<sup>nd</sup> Ear); Andries Wolfaardt (2<sup>nd</sup> Ear).

Children: Mohamed Abood; Owetu Duze (2<sup>nd</sup> Ear); Marelize Nienaber; Shiela Kundu; Benjamin Plutsick.

### MED-EL IN SOUTH AFRICA



Med-El will be opening a local office in South Africa in August. Peter Clementi will be moving to Cape Town from Austria to run this office but will spend time assisting the teams who are already working with this product. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Henk Wolmarans for his assistance over the years and wish him well in his new ventures.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES



Roxanne Fick, who is a counselling psychologist in private practice, has been spending some time with members of the JCIP team. Roxanne has worn hearing

aids since the age of 5 years and is interested in assisting other people with hearing loss. She offers individual, group and family therapy as well as study and career guidance. If you would like to contact Roxanne, her details are available at JCIC.

### BEING EAR-RESPONSIBLE



The Johannesburg Cochlear Implant Programme has been active since 1992. During this time we have seen many exciting developments in technology and for many years have used devices from two different implant companies namely **Cochlear and Med-El**.

The worldwide trend has been to empower the cochlear implant user to become as independent as possible. With this in mind it seems to be appropriate to explore the responsibilities of the recipients and their families, the team members and the companies. Experience has shown us that by working together we can ensure the best outcomes.

### Care of the Processor:



- Keep the **processor** clean and dry. Remember to use the 'dri-and-store' or storage case every night.
- Monitor **battery** use and ensure that you order batteries well in advance especially over weekends and holiday periods. Monitor how long your rechargeable batteries are holding their charge. Your rechargeable battery should last you approximately 1 - 2 years. These batteries and the chargers have a one year warranty so if you prefer to use rechargeables you need to make allowance to purchase new batteries when they wear out. The average cost of a battery is between R1 500.00 and R2 500.00 (dependent on device). Remember that every processor does come with a standard battery pack so that you can use disposable batteries if necessary.
- Ensure that your **microphones** are clean and that the covers are not clogged. This may involve brushing gently over the microphone to keep it dust-free or changing the microphone covers which cost between R145.00 and R320.00 dependent on

the model. The microphone can be checked by using the monitor earphones or, in some models, by using the troubleshooting component of the remote control.

- Check that you have spare **cables**. It is very frustrating to be unable to hear because of a small but critical item. Cable design and strength has improved significantly over the years, but this remains a vulnerable item that is critical to the functioning of the processor. The original kit will have two cables. The **Cochlear** cable is under warranty for one year so if one breaks you need to contact your clinic as soon as possible to arrange for a replacement. **Med-El** will replace every two broken cables with one new one. If you use a body worn battery pack or your child uses a paediatric kit check that you have a spare long cable available.
- Check your kits for extra **earhooks** – a number of people have had to be very inventive to keep an otherwise functional processor on the ear because of a broken or lost hook!
- Be familiar with the **controls** of your processor and remote control. Advanced technology gives us many choices but this means that the CI user can change programmes, volumes and other settings – sometimes unintentionally! If you feel unsure about the functioning of your device please contact your audiologist or let us know if you would find it useful to have a group meeting to familiarise yourself with controls and remotes.

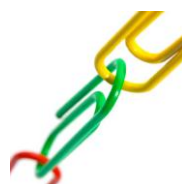
#### Assessment and MAPping session:



These sessions are important to ensure that the processor is functioning optimally. You will be aware that in the early days of getting the implant these sessions are more frequent, but even when you are an experienced CI user it is important to visit your audiologist once a year. At this visit the audiologist will assess your hearing ability in the soundproof booth including threshold levels, speech discrimination abilities and listening in noise. These tests give insight into the general functioning of the processor, changes that may be made to the map, additional map changes that could assist you in different environments and whether a period of speech therapy or an assistive device such as an FM System would assist you. The audiologist will check the functioning of your external and internal device as well as the level of the maps.

The administrative staff at JCIC will contact you to remind you that you are due for an annual assessment, but sometimes contact details change so please view arranging these assessments as a joint responsibility!

#### Clinic responsibilities:



The JCIC keeps a supply of disposable batteries for sale. We also have some small items such as microphone covers, mic locks and earhooks for emergencies. There are loaner processors available should your processor suddenly stop working as well as some second hand cables, battery packs and other items to try to avoid times of being “off-line”.

The clinicians at JCIC make every attempt to keep abreast of changes in technology, new assistive devices, new therapy and surgical techniques and research from around the world regarding best mapping results. Your input and co-operation in terms of annual assessments enables us to gather and analyse information and the team can use it to improve our service to you.

#### What happens when your Cochlear Implant is out of warranty?



The internal component of your implant has a ten year warranty. The **external processor has a three year warranty** but items such as rechargeable batteries, cables and coils only have a one year warranty. If your processor has to be sent for repair or service during the warranty period the clinic will provide you with a loaner free of charge. However if your processor is out of warranty, a loaner will be provided at a cost of R400.00. The cost of the repair has to be paid to the device provider i.e. Southern ENT or Medel before they will release the device to the clinic to be reloaded and returned to you. The cost of the repair is usually between R3000.00 and R6 500.00.

For smaller items the clinic may have a second-hand item for you to use while arranging to purchase a new one. You may elect to purchase the second-hand item but it would be supplied with no warranty.

#### The companies role:

The JCIC works closely with the two companies whose products we use. We need the companies to provide us with loaners, ensure repair turn-around times that are as short as possible, provide feedback regarding problems noted on repairs and ways of preventing these from recurring and to deliver spare and replacement

parts as a matter of urgency. The companies undertake to keep the clinic abreast of their latest developments and new trends in the field of cochlear implant. They also provide support staff for complicated surgeries and MAPping sessions as well as training in advanced therapy techniques.

It is important that you as the consumer understand that all financial issues related to the actual device are between you and the relevant company. The JCIC is not responsible for any financial arrangements regarding purchases that you may make and cannot release the parts until the company gives us the go-ahead.

#### A LETTER FROM ISRAEL



"I have been traveling around Israel for almost four and a half months. We have hiked, seen museums and overlooked incredible views of the mountains and waterfalls. It has truly been a spectacular experience. I am also engaged in religious studies some of the time. My program, called MTA, combines Southern hemisphere countries, namely South Africa and Australia. I have made amazing new friends and gotten closer to others.

There is a funny story which I should share with you: MTA was put onto a kibbutz (Israeli settlement which is typically based on agriculture) for a few weeks. My group was tasked with sorting out red peppers that were harvested for pickling. One Saturday morning at 4am, I felt my friend shaking me awake. It was still dark outside, my hearing-aids (*CI processors*) were off and I was confused why she was trying to drag me out of bed. It was the Sabbath for us so we were not allowed to switch on the lights. I could not lip-read her in the dark and she was acting and shouting frantically. After several attempts to persuade me to get out of bed, she ran out the room, circling her arm in the air. Then I understood. An air-raid had rang out, warning us of the incoming rockets from Gaza. I dashed out of bed and joined my program, taking cover in a shelter. A second air-raid rang out a few minutes later after we had all left the shelter. By then, I had my hearing-aids (*processors*) on. The sound was loud enough to send me screaming back to the shelter. It was such a scary experience, but as I now look back, I can't help laughing.

Another time, we were hiking in the mountains in Northern Israel called the Golan Heights. It is a beautiful stretch of mountains through which clear waters flow. Before the hike began, we were told that there was a part in the hiking trail that included a pool in which hikers must swim in order to reach the other side where the trail continued. We could only bring items that could get wet. Obviously I had a problem. Our guide gave me two plastic gloves to put my hearing-aids (*CI processors*) in for when we reach the water. She warned me that this would not work 100% and maybe I should sit out. I didn't not want to miss this opportunity, so I volunteered to hike without my hearing-aids (it was a 6-hour hike). The security officer interjected and explained that this could be dangerous and insisted that I wear my hearing-aids (*CI processors*). So with the plastic gloves in hand, I joined the hike. When we reached the water, a friend and I created a hearing-aid (*CI processor*) protection package: the two gloves, a packet, a scarf and then three additional packets wrapped and knotted around the hearing-aids. My friend's back-pack managed to float, so we put my Hearing-aid (*CI processor*) package onto the bag and pushed it along the surface of the water as we swam. We managed to get my hearing-aids (*CI processors*) across safely and very dry.

I have truly gained much from my time in Israel. My handicap has taught me to broaden my horizons and to appreciate the hidden beauty in what surrounds me because I could so easily have been in a situation where these beauties would have been cloaked in silence. There have been times when a situation gets very difficult and exhausting but coming to Israel has been one of the best decisions of my life and I cannot wait for the upcoming months of learning and self-exploration."

Hope to hear from you soon.

Love,  
Lior Blumenthal

**(Lior received her first CI in 1998 and the second one in 2003. At present she is using Freedom processors).**

Please send us your stories- sharing experiences can be really encouraging and inspirational for other users and team members alike.

**Don't forget to send in your comments, questions, suggestions and stories! Please share them with us at [admin@jcic.co.za](mailto:admin@jcic.co.za) or +27 11 482 6141 / +27 11 356 6510 and we will include them or reply to them in our next edition.**