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| **Theme and subtheme** | **Topic** | **Description** | **Quote** | |
| **THEME 1: Definition of EA** | | | | |
| Service delivery | Roles & responsibilities | The perceived roles and responsibilities of the educational audiologist were included within the service delivery – specifically in terms of providing services to children/ learners in a school setting that focuses on children with hearing loss | *“Services delivered by audiologists to children with hearing impairments within the educational setting.” (S P41)*  *“Hearing screenings, hearing tests, hearing aid fittings, therapy and aural rehab provided to children of school age either in a private or public work setting or at school.” (S P1)*  *“…It may also include the advisory and training role of acoustic environments, FM technology and staff and teachers involved with children with hearing loss.” (S P17)*  *“…I feel like the main thing is an educational audiologist is an advocate for the child, for the patient…” (F P3)* |
| Setting | EA service delivery should be restricted to schools for children with special needs. | *“…an audiologist based in a school setting or an Education Centre.” (F P1)*  *“An offer of audiology services to schools that cater for children with a hearing loss.” (S P5)*  *“Educational audiology is a broad term which probably covers the management and ongoing audiological care of learners based in a special school environment…” (S P17)*  *“Provision of audiological services in the school/ educational environment.” (S P30)*  *“Services delivered in the school settings regarding hearing, hearing loss and in general assisting kids to learn better.” (S P 49)* | |
| Working as a team | Teachers | Parents and the teachers are the most prominent members of the team when managing a child with hearing loss. | *“Making sure that the team being the parents, the educators, and any therapists that might be in the educational setting of the child are aware of the child's auditory needs and that the child is accounted for in the educational setting.” (F P1)*  *“…collaborations with the educational team and with the parents of the children that are served.” (S P26)* | |
| Parents | Parents (as members of the team) should take more responsibility for their child’s access to services. | *“…put the ball in the parents’ court and tell them this is now also your responsibility as it is my responsibility…” (F P2)* | |
| Benefits of service delivery | Benefits to children with HL | There is a benefit in providing EA services to children who need it, these benefits included improved access to sound and thus better educational outcomes. | *“An audiologist in a school setting that aims to improve the child with a HL's access to sound to be able to learn in the classroom”. (S P 56)*  *“…ensure that children with hearing loss are accommodated in their classroom in a way that maximizes their learning opportunities so that they can meet their full potential.” (S P 63)*  *“Helping scholars to improve their quality of life by providing audiological services/knowledge” (S P44)* | |
| **THEME 2: Perceived challenges to service delivery** | | | | |
| Parental influence | Parental commitment and understanding of the process | Parents not attending therapy sessions and children not wearing their hearing devices at home. | *“…one of the biggest issues that we struggle with is parent understanding, education and commitment to the process…” (F P1)*  *“…if the parents don’t believe in the process or don’t understand why it’s important, then your device use is usually very often poor…” (F P1)* | |
| Financial burden | Parents might not have the financial means to attend all sessions or even buy the appropriate hearing devices for their children. | *“…There could be a financial burden work commitment. That transport issues now they must commit to bringing you know, their child then once a week…” (F P1)*  *“…my first thing would say that its finances. With a child, not everyone has access to the finances that are available…” (F P2)* | |
| Access to resources | Schools | Schools have limited access to resources, in terms of what is needed to provide for a child with hearing loss. This includes access to equipment for audiological testing. | *“I think also main part, if we look at our schools for the deaf is also resources. Most of them are based in the public sector and resources are very, very limited because they only have a short budget to work from and they usually don't get the most needed equipment that…” (F P2)*  *“Especially in a public health setting, where resources are not readily available.” (S P22)* | |
| Service providers | Research has shown that there is a shortage of audiologists in the field, but the perception is that in private practice it is not viable to generate enough money if the focus is only on children. | *“…It's hard in private practice. Why would you go and do further training? I mean it's very well known that Paediatrics are a drain on a private practice. They do not make you money. They take a lot of time and a lot of energy…” (F P1)*  *“Limited resources, not accessible to all.” (S P27)* | |
| The educational environment | Teachers | Teachers in South Africa face some challenges in the classroom, and it could be that these challenges impact the child with hearing loss and the service delivery of EA. | *“…know from the teacher side, I think from their side if they have 40 children in the class, I'm not sure if they are very open to actually receive the [support) ]..” (F P4)*  *“…I feel like teachers that aren't equipped with the knowledge about certain disabilities like hearing, they don't really take into consideration what the child’s needs are because of the amount or how big their classes are that they can't give that individual attention and that's how the child falls through the cracks…” (F P3)* | |
| **THEME 3: Improving service delivery** | | | | |
| From Audiologists’ perspective | Better-defined responsibilities | EA is not well-defined and that until a better definition is generated, the service delivery will not improve. This also alludes to audiologists having a lack of knowledge about what EA is. | *“…I think that's where the confusion comes in. What exactly is educational audiology? Nobody really knows… I think just better defining what educational audiologists will be responsible in doing, because there's a lot of question mark [about] what you need in order to be doing educational audiology…” (F P2)*  *“Many people know less about it.” (S P25)*  *“Don’t understand the term.” (S P28)* | |
| More information and training | There are not enough training opportunities for audiologists after they finished their undergraduate studies to train as educational audiologists. | *“…What can you do to develop your… [skills] but just I think there's a very big gap with regards to CEU events regarding educational audiology…” (F P2)*  *“…I don't even remember if we had any lectures on educational audiology. I have to assume we did. They clearly didn't stick with me and it certainly wasn't a big section, but I feel these days if you want to go into a field within your field. You need to kind of specialize. And that doesn't mean necessarily doing extra training, although obviously that is beneficial… It might be in-house training, you know, within the centre that you're in. It might be CPD’s. But I think in any area in audiology that you specialize, you do need further training…” (F P1)* | |
| Support | From the Department of Health | The general perception is that audiologists could not provide EA services alone and that educational audiologists need more support from the Department of Health and the Department of Basic Education when providing their services. | *“…I think that the education departments should have advisors who are audiology trained. And can go in and support, because I certainly don't expect audiologists in the public sector to try and support the number of patients they have on their caseloads…” (F P1)*  *“…I think the education department needs to take some responsibility for educational audiologists, certainly in the public sector, anything kind of health related…” (F P1)* | |
| From other audiologists in the field | Audiologists who are employed in an educational setting should do more to advocate for their post and to create awareness of the field of EA. | *“…I feel if they advocate and they put in the, the more the more effort into it it could be. More positively seen now than before…” (F P3)* | |
| From Audiologists working in private practice | Audiologists working in private practice need to support the children that they see in the educational setting. | *“…But then their business model should include the support of the patient…” (F P1)*  *“…But go a little bit further and tell them that we are here to support you [the child with hearing loss] and if you would like, we can set up a Zoom meeting with your teacher if they are game for that and have an honest discussion about what we can do for this child. I mean, it won't take anything from, it won't cost you money to get to the school and we have resources available like Zoom or. Just a phone call…”(F P2)* | |