

Communication with deaf and hearing impaired people

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Abstract

Communication is as old as human kind and by that it holds extreme importance while allowing people to express feelings, share information and so on. Problem of today's society is that big percentage of people is not well informed and it is scared to approach people with hearing loss, a partial hearing loss or other impaired senses. In other words, people with healthy sense of hearing often avoid and reject deaf, hearing impaired and deafblind people due to lack of knowledge and communication problems. Through this paper we will try to get closer to those people. Besides the theoretical part which will be accompanied by scientific literature such as books, publications and Internet sources, the paper is also based on the conducted research. Paper presents the results of research carried out through an online survey and an interview. Point of this research was to establish how well informed Croatian people are about hearing impaired and deafblind people through an online survey. A survey was created with help of Google Forms which is a part of Google Docs service. Firstly, we needed a paper-drawn survey which we wanted to put on the internet, and secure its availability from any computer or mobile phone with a global network connection. Secondly we needed a Google Account, which many of us already use for electronic communications. Through private address book which contains e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and thanks to availability of social network such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, we rounded up survey takers who have accessed the survey via the published link. Via an online survey, sample of 178 respondents have been questioned of which 68,54% were women, and 31,46% were men. According to the education, majority of survey takers with finished high school (39%) knows about hearing impaired, and majority with collage or undergraduate degree (22%) knows about deafblind people. Besides, doing the interview, we wanted to find out all the obstacles and problems they are facing through life to understand their point of view. Data was collected in the period from end of April through the end of July of 2018.

The results confirmed that 78% survey takers of Croatian population has heard of hearing impaired people and 51% has heard about deaf blindness. Most of the survey takers do not know or are not sure about the way of communicating with hearing impaired and deafblind people, and a very small percentage (11%) of survey takers have more often been in contact with them. With the given results, this paper should encourage population of Croatia to start thinking more actively about their hearing impaired and deafblind fellow citizens so their life in the community would be easier.

Keywords: deafness; hard of hearing; deafblindness; communication

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