

# **A Survey on current knowledge and practices of teleaudiology among audiology professionals in Sri Lanka**

Prabodani, G. V.<sup>1,2\*</sup> and Jayasena, B. N.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

<sup>2</sup>*Ayati National Centre for Children with Disabilities, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

<sup>3</sup>*Rathmalana Audiology Centre, Rathmalana, Sri Lanka*

[\\*vindya2016geeganage@gmail.com](mailto:vindya2016geeganage@gmail.com)

**Background:** With the advancement of technology and resources, telehealth is becoming a prominent method of filling the gaps in conventional audiology services across the world. Teleaudiology services in Sri Lanka are evolving and still is an under addressed area of local literature compared to other telehealth applications in the medical sector.

**Objectives:** To describe the current knowledge and practices of teleaudiology and factors affecting planning and implementation of teleaudiology services in Sri Lanka.

**Methods:** This is a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among 104 (n=104) audiology professionals employed in public and private audiology work setups across the country. Objectives of the study were evaluated through an online self-administered questionnaire, which was configured as a Google form.

**Results:** The study yielded a response rate of 83.87% and a majority (75.0%) of the participants were female and the age distribution of participants was between 25 and 45 years. A majority (79.8%) of the practitioners reported awareness on teleaudiology while 32.7% of them were utilizing teleaudiology in practice. Initiation of teleaudiology was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic for the majority. Audiology practitioners reported the use of telepractice predominantly in counselling, education, training, hearing aid related rehabilitation, and prevention of hearing and balance related conditions as individual or group sessions, utilizing a hybrid telehealth model. More than 75.0% of the services were centralized within the Western province in private centres and the teen to adult age range was served through telepractice predominantly. Despite practices, several factors and challenges were reported to influence teleaudiology practices, including the lack of facilities and resources as the major challenge while reporting several benefits of practice also.

**Conclusions:** The findings of the study indicate that teleaudiology services are currently available in Sri Lanka, but it is centralized within a narrow geographic area and primarily restricted only to certain services. No information can be derived on the trend of teleaudiology in Sri Lanka due to the lack of evidence in the existing literature. This study sheds a light on current knowledge and practices of teleaudiology with an emphasis on factors affecting it, which will assist in improving services further.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge, Practices, Teleaudiology, Audiology Professionals, Sri Lanka*