

Data Collection

speechreading performance using a longitudinal

the given stage in the experiment, was the speaker throughout the training and testing period up until the last session. This left open the possibility for conscious or unconscious bias to impact the results.

The studies described above involved tactile aids with differing numbers of channels, differing places of stimulation, and different testing and training methods. Still, there are consistencies between the results of the studies that allow some inferences to be drawn. Firstly, tactile devices will not improve speechreading performance at a sentence level initially (i.e., Yuan et al., 2005; Andersson et al., 2001), and may in some cases hinder performance (i.e., Andersson et al., 2001). Secondly, multi-channel aids outperform single-channel aids (i.e., Yuan et al., 2005; Andersson et al., 2001). Thirdly, user's speechreading performance will increase with training (i.e., Plant, 1998; Andersson et al., 2001).

It seems apparent that tactile devices can provide useful information to supplement speechreading with appropriate training. Whether the real-world performance benefit is worth the time and effort involved requires further research. A greater number of longitudinal studies with a larger number of subjects and varying training methods should help to make this picture a little clearer.

Clinical Implications

Overall, the evidence provides support that individuals with severe-to-profound hearing loss can