Appendix 8: Research Study Protocol for Clinicians

Prior to the start of the study, you will receive an invitation from the Supervisor, Steve Aiken, team member Michael Sharpe, or the researcher, Patricia Van Roon. The invitation will include a link to a survey to schedule a short Zoom meeting to introduce you to the project. Patricia will answer all of your questions to the best of her ability. If a question goes unanswered, Patricia will consult with Steve, and get you the answer as soon as possible.

Clinician Responsibilities

We would like you to do the following (most of which you will be doing as part of your return to clinical work):

1. Identify clients who meet all of the following criteria:
    a. Have had COVID-19
    b. Have hearing tests for the past two years (prior to contracting COVID-19)
    c. Have no hearing loss or have hearing loss that is primarily sensorineural and non-fluctuating (e.g., age-related or noise-induced loss)
2. Ask the client if they would like to be part of the research study (an optional flyer and information sheet is included for your convenience).
3. Obtain informed consent. If informed consent is completed at the time of the appointment: Provide the client with the consent form and allow the client enough time to read everything. Make sure the client is aware of their rights as a volunteer. Allow the client to ask questions. If you cannot answer the client's questions, please provide Patricia's home office phone number. Patricia will not ask the client their name. It is best if they call the home office phone number provided in the consent form to maintain anonymity. Patricia will provide fillable forms for your convenience.
4. From your records, make a copy of two pre-COVID-19 hearing tests and anonymize the data (remove subject name and identifying information except for date of birth and biological sex). Patricia can provide you with a list of unique identifiers (participant codes) if you need one. If you use your own system for anonymizing the data, please add the prefix code that Patricia will provide. The code will help identify the general location of the clinic.
5. Make a copy of the present hearing test, and anonymize this record along with the two pre-COVID-19 hearing tests (e.g., audiograms from 2018, 2019 and 2020 or

2021). All the information for one client should have the same unique identifier (participant code).

6. Ask the client to complete the two-question COVID-19 Severity Questionnaire and add the same unique identifier as used for the hearing tests.
7. When you are ready to upload the files, please contact Patricia. She will send you an invitation to upload the documents to an encrypted folder on Dropbox.
8. Upload 3 – 5 consent forms at a time to maintain anonymity into the encrypted "Consent Forms" folder. That is, you do not need to send the consent form when the client arrives at the clinic. Consent forms include client names, so please keep the identifiable information separate from the research data.
9. Upload the hearing tests into the encrypted "Hearing Tests" folder and upload the corresponding questionnaire into the encrypted "Questionnaires" folder. If sending results for more than one participant at a time, it would be helpful to use the same unique identifier. The researcher will ask you to maintain a list of participants that link client names to unique identifiers. If a client would be interested in participating in future studies, please invite the client to contact Patricia and provide their unique identifier.
10. Please make sure the client understands you have anonymized their data and, once you upload their data, the client will not be able to withdraw it.
11. Please inform the client that their anonymized data may be placed on a publicly available repository to share with other researchers.