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# A model for prelingual deafness, the congenitally deaf white cat " population statistics and degenerative changes

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## Abstract

Cochlear implantation in congenitally deaf children leads to electrical stimulation of an entirely naive central auditory system. In this case, processes of central auditory maturation are induced by the electric stimuli. For the study of these processes the deaf white cat (DWC) appears to be an appropriate model. However, a knowledge of the basic data of these animals is necessary before such a model may be used. This paper presents these data and is one of a series of publications concerning congenital deafness in children and cochlear implantation. In our strain 72% of the animals are totally deaf as judged by the absence of any brain stem evoked potentials at click intensities up to 120 dB SPL peak equivalent. Primarily, there is a degeneration of the entire organ of Corti during the first postnatal weeks. An absence of acoustically evoked brain stem responses in the early postnatal weeks shows that DWCs probably never have any hearing

experience. Months after the degeneration of the organ of Corti, the spiral ganglion starts to degenerate from the midportion of the cochlea. However, even in adult cats (2 years), a sufficient number of functionally intact auditory afferents remain, which are suitable for electrical cochlear stimulation.



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## Keywords

Congenital deafness; Organ of Corti; Auditory nerve; Spiral ganglion; Degeneration; Cat; Hearing deficit; Waardenburg

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