

PCH Ear Portal: An urban-based Ears, Nose and Throat (ENT) and Audiology referral telehealth portal to provide equitable access to specialist ear health services for children

ACTRN12619000039189

Status	RECRUITING
Sponsor	Telethon Kids Institute
Enrollment	360 participants

Plain Language Summary

Middle ear infections and fluid behind the eardrum are very common in young children and can affect hearing and speech development if not treated. However, wait times to see a specialist at Perth Children's Hospital (PCH) can stretch beyond two years. This study tests whether a telehealth 'ear portal' — where children are assessed at a local health centre using technology linked to PCH specialists — can dramatically reduce these wait times to under four weeks.

Children are assessed for ear disease at their local centre, and images and information are sent digitally to PCH audiologists and ENT specialists, who can then make recommendations remotely. The study compares outcomes for children seen through this telehealth pathway versus those waiting for in-person specialist care.

Your child may be eligible if they are aged between 6 months and 6 years, live within 60 km of Perth, and have been identified as having ear disease — specifically, fluid in the ear for more than 3 months, frequent ear infections, or concerns about hearing or speech development. The study aims to include at least 20% Aboriginal children to ensure adequate representation, given the high rates of ear disease in this group.

Key Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion (6)

- Children will be eligible for the study to be enrolled in the appropriate cohort if they meet all of the following criteria:
- Aged between 6 months and 6 years old.
- Live within the greater metropolitan region of Perth (within a 60km radius)
- Identified during triage of initial referral to PCH for hearing or ear related issue
- Have been screened and identified as having ear disease as defined by; evidence of OM with effusion (OME) for >3 months; a history of 3 episodes of OM in the past 6 months; 4 episodes of OM in the past 12 months; or significant parental concerns regarding their child's hearing or speech development.

... and 1 more (see full listing online)

Exclusion (3)

- All participants:
- Are a CAT 1 (urgent) referral. Treatment will be sought immediately for these children.
- The child's legal representative (parent/guardian) is unwilling or unable to provide informed consent to participate.

Locations (1 total)

Perth Children's Hospital - Nedlands, WA, Australia

<https://www.anzctr.org.au/Trial/Registration/TrialReview.aspx?ACTRN=ACTRN12619000039189>

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