

Audiology Awareness in Zimbabwe Based on a University of Zimbabwe Audiology Student's Experiences

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The writer is a female Audiology student at the University of Zimbabwe, College of Health Sciences, Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa. She is in the pioneer class of the program in the whole country and theirs will be the first ever batch of Audiologists trained in Zimbabwe and shares her story reflecting the awareness of on profession in the country.

As I walked into the rehabilitation department in August of 2018 with the hope of making it into the Physiotherapy class, each step drew me closer to the beginning of my beautiful and interesting Audiology journey. It was at that point I heard Audiology for the very first time in my life. Absolutely clueless and confused about what that was, I was referred to my now Audiology lecturer and one of the very few Audiologists in the whole of Zimbabwe who shed light on the career and I knew this was definitely where my heart was so I enthusiastically grabbed the opportunity. As it was the first month of College, my family and friends would always ask what I was studying and the most common responses I got upon telling them Audiology were:

1. "Oh so you will be working in studios, have you started producing music already?" _audiology.
2. "Sorry, what was that. Mind to come again?" Because it's a growing area, it would probably be their first time hearing it therefore, they would miss it the first time or just require confirmation.
3. "Yeyyy finally we have a Radiologist, we're going to be getting free X-rays and all". Audiology sounds like Radiology which is more common in the country.

Fast forward, I'm now in my final year and still getting the same responses from people who ask me what I'm studying for the first time and to make matters worse, even some fellow healthcare professionals for example doctors, nurses just to name but a few sometimes ask the same questions. Furthermore, not only do they end there, they even go on to ask if there any people who require Audiology services and this is also an indicator that hearing health is still a jettisoned field as the discipline is still growing with just about nine Audiologists serving the whole country.

Clearly, there's is a major gap in the general audiology awareness in Zimbabwe.

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