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Successful doctor with cochlear implants

Dr. Veronika Wolter has been hearing impaired since she was nine, and five years ago she was fitted with bilateral cochlear implants.

Today, she's a resident in the ENT clinic at the Martha-Maria Hospital in Munich (Germany), passing on her own experiences directly to her patients.

During her studies, Veronika Wolter found out that the hearing impaired must fight much harder and always be better than their hearing colleagues. And now she has managed it: she's a doctor in the ENT clinic at the Martha-Maria Hospital in Munich.

This wouldn't have been possible without the support of her superior, Professor Suckfüll. The clinic has equipped a sound-proof treatment room for Dr. Wolter. In her room, the acoustics are optimised, so that she can save her energy for the other challenging situations encountered in the clinic.

How do your patients react?

- Many of them find it very interesting that I'm a doctor who is hard of hearing, in a job which requires a lot of communication. It motivates my patients. They see that there are options open to them.

Despite her cochlear implants, Veronika Wolter very quickly realised that she needed more support in order to communicate with her patients and understand her colleagues' instructions correctly and reliably during operations. Her audiologist, who also cares for the clinic's CI patients, told her about Comfort Digisystem, the digital radio transmission system from Comfort Audio.

What were your first impressions?

- It was as if someone was speaking loudly and clearly, straight into my ears. You can understand someone without having to watch them at the same time - a wonderful experience! And it reduces stress levels significantly.

The transmission system has become a vital tool in her daily work. Whether debriefing after a visit, in surgery or at a conference. And even during consultations or when admitting new patients, where Dr Wolter often meets people who can only whisper very quietly.

Do you talk to your patients about the system?

- I always let my patients listen in to my system. To do so, they just need to activate their T-coil, then I connect them to my inductive receiver. We are currently setting up a hearing centre within the clinic, in which we wish to reinforce and

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Was it difficult to get approval for the system?

- It was actually very easy, and I had support from the Integration Office and Integration Services (in Germany), who were very professional.

You get in touch with them and ask about technical aids. Then you receive a form where you give the severity of your hearing impairment and state that the solution is intended for use and integration at work. You also have to give the devices you need for this and that they've already been tested.

Just a few weeks later, I could collect my complete system from my audiologist. The financing of technical help at work is different in all countries, an audiologist or Comfort Audio will be able to help.

Could you carry out your work without a radio transmission system?

- In surgery, I see very little chance. When someone speaks, you automatically look at their mouth, and in surgery you can't see anything because of the surgical masks. It's a huge limitation for me. Before, I used to really struggle in surgery, and just hoped no one would ask me any questions. It was very stressful.

Which technical developments would you like to see?

- In general, I would like wind noise reduction, and a waterproof device. The market continues to develop, so maybe in the near future it will be possible.

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