

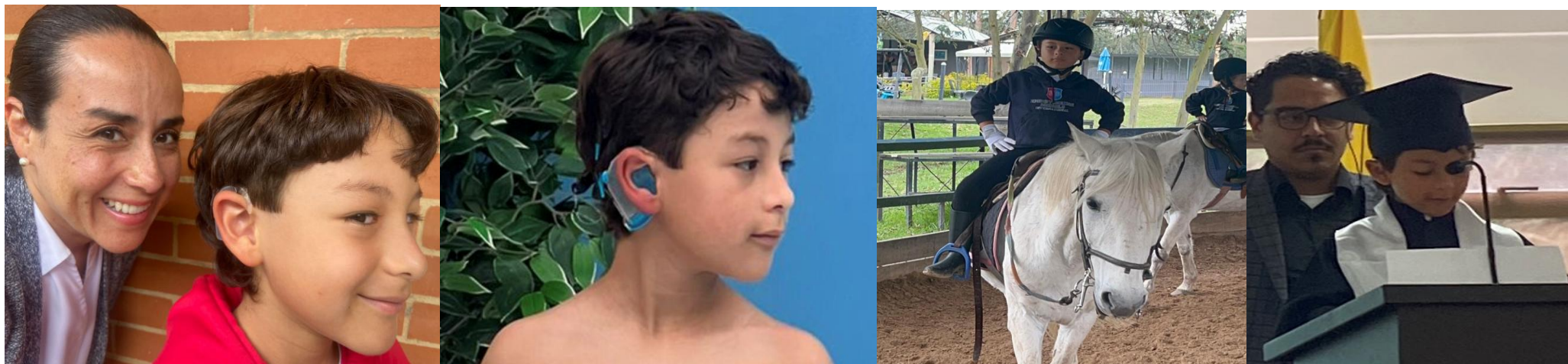
Parental Challenges in Colombia



A Mother's Perspective

Marcela Varela Vargas

A Proud Mum of Nicolás



"The hearing solution has had a huge impact on Nico's life, as it allowed him to become a hearing child again and has enhanced his unique ability to learn every day without limits, just like any other hearing child."

When a child listens, a family dreams

Health Services in Colombia

Coverage

Diagnosis, surgery, cochlear implant and post-implantation services, Technical support and advice on post-implantation services, National coverage and Telemedicine services

*Excludes consumables



Neonatal Hearing Screening

Universal neonatal hearing screening law

Support

Assistance in administrative procedures and psychological counseling

Health System Changes

Uncertainty health system changes and access barriers

Principal Challenges and Barriers in Colombia

Diagnostic Barriers

- Limited access to diagnostic tests
- Insufficient trained personnel

Economic Barriers

- Inequality in access
- Costs such as travel to specialized centers in remote areas



Technical and Medical Barriers

- Availability of specialized centers
- Device maintenance

Barriers During Post-Implant Rehabilitation

- Access and continuity of hearing rehabilitation therapies
- Low levels of family and social support

Principal Challenges and Barriers in Colombia

Administrative Barriers

- Waiting times for paperwork and authorizations.
- Unknown regulations by health care providers.



Psychological and Social Barriers

- Stigmatization
- Emotional adaptation
- Social and schooling inclusion

Information and Education Barriers

Insufficient information to patients, their families and educators.

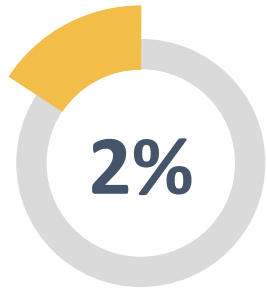
Numbers and Realities of Hearing Loss

Prevalence of severe to complete hearing loss, 2022

Latam

Prevalence
2.077.295 People

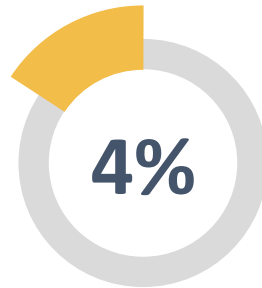
40.565 People
with cochlear
implants



Colombia

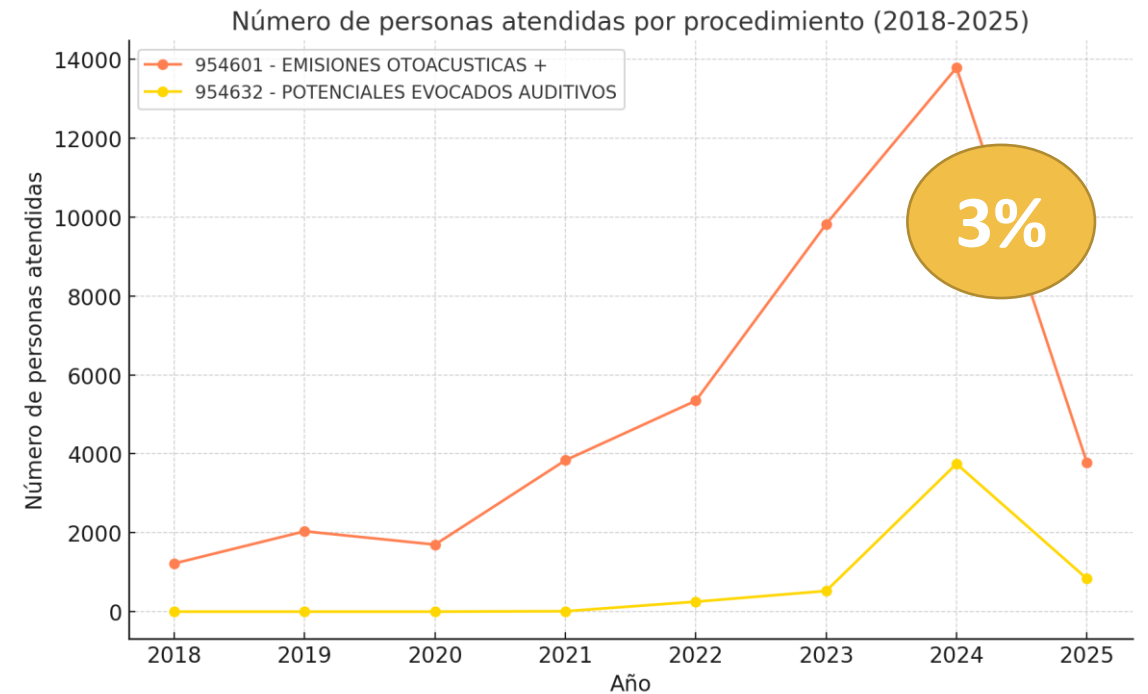
Prevalence
195.208 People

8.375 People with
cochlear implants



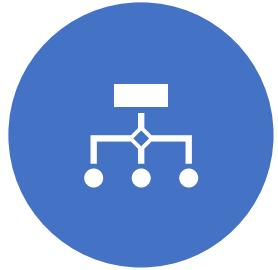
% Penetration in population with prevalence

Neonatal Hearing Screening

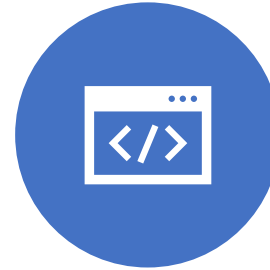


Age at implantation: 5 years

Reality in LMICs like Colombia and LATAM



Unequal access: Although coverage exists in the public system, access to diagnosis, implantation, and rehabilitation is limited by administrative barriers, waiting times, and regional inequality.



Out-of-pocket expenses: Many families must cover transportation, therapies, batteries, and maintenance, which are not always included in health plans.



Geographical inequality: Access is available in Bogota and large cities, but almost non-existent in rural areas.



Sustainability of services: Initial coverage (the implant) exists, but follow-up and rehabilitation services throughout life are unstable.

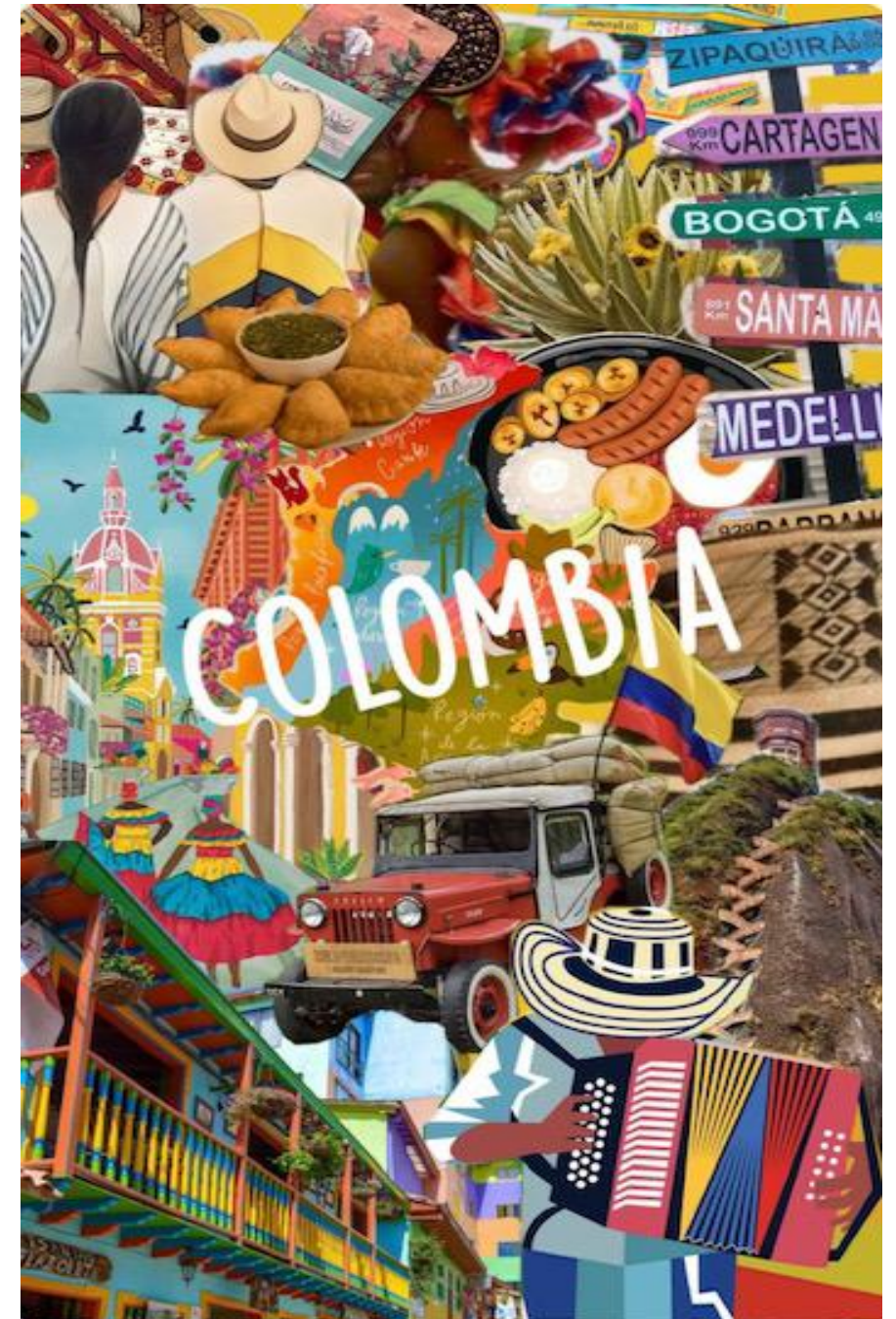
Similarities with Latin America

- Late diagnoses, hidden costs, excessive paperwork.
- **Fragmented healthcare models** → partial coverage, lack of integration between diagnosis, implantation, and rehabilitation.
- **Human resource gaps** → few audiologists, specialized therapists, and no knowledge of CIs.



Similarities with Latin America

- **Dependence on family spending** → high economic impact for families.
- **Access restricted by bureaucratic procedures** → "the insurer's time is not the child's time."
- **Need for sustainability** → covering surgery is not enough; a lifelong support network is needed.



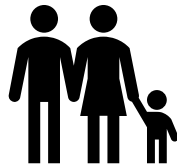
What do we need?



Investing in hearing is investing in social inclusion and productivity. Every dollar invested in hearing health is multiplied in education, employment, and quality of life.



Coverage must be comprehensive and sustainable: early diagnosis, implantation, rehabilitation, maintenance, and educational support.



The voice of families is essential: we are the ones who experience the barriers every day.



We need international cooperation: sharing experiences between countries, generating reference models adapted to low- and middle-income countries.

Call to Action

Let's not allow bureaucracy to extinguish hope.

Every cochlear implant is a beginning, not an end.

Now we need systems that guarantee sustainable access.

When a child hears, a family dreams.

Thank you so much for your attention