

Empowerment from the eyes and ears of Audiologists

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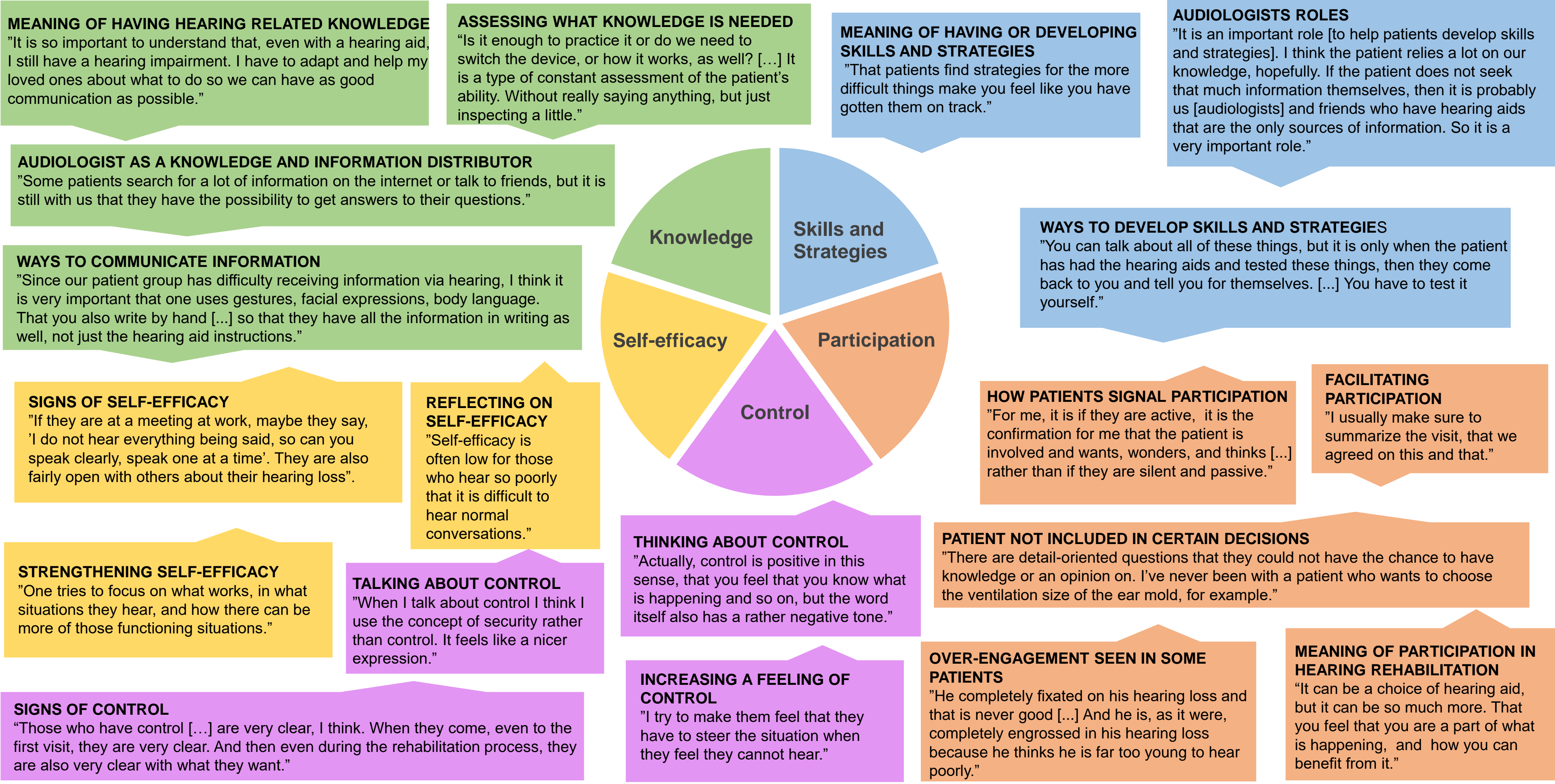
Background

- Although a recent World Health Organization Report (2021) envisioned, “a world in which no individual experiences hearing loss due to preventable causes, and those with hearing loss can achieve their full potential through rehabilitation, education and empowerment”, the intersection of empowerment and hearing loss from an audiological care perspective has received little research attention
- In an earlier study (Gotowiec et al, 2022), we used Zimmerman’s (1995) psychological empowerment framework to conceptualize empowerment on the hearing journey from the patient perspective: **knowledge, skills and strategies, participation, self-efficacy, and control** were important dimensions of this journey
- The current study builds on this work by investigating these five dimensions of empowerment from the viewpoint of audiologists

Methods

- Five focus groups with 3-5 participants each (Team 1: n=4, Team 2: n=5, Team 3: n= 3, Team 4: n= 3, Team 5: n= 4), conducted online
- Participants were audiologists based in Sweden with at least three months of full-time experience with hearing rehabilitation
- 19 audiologists (4 males), mean age = 41.3 years (range 25-61), mean working experience with hearing rehabilitation = 11.9 years (range 1-38)
- Data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021)

Results



Discussion

When presented with the word ‘empowerment’, Swedish audiologists expressed that they were not familiar with the term. However, when presented with the *dimensions* of empowerment, (knowledge, skills and strategies, participation, self-efficacy, and control) all five were described as relevant to their clinical work. The dimensions knowledge, skills and strategies, and participation immediately elicited a lot of reflections, whereas control and self-efficacy seemed less concrete and therefore slightly more difficult for the audiologists to discuss. Nevertheless, our preliminary analyses suggest that for audiologists, the dimensions of empowerment overlap in a way that appears similar to the hearing patient population investigated in previous research on this topic (Gotowiec, 2022). For example, knowledge is needed to develop strategies, and participation is encouraged to strengthen patient’s self-efficacy. The current findings support the need for further investigation into the relationship between the empowerment dimensions and how audiologists can be supported to empower their clients through both their dialogue and clinical interactions.

References:
Braun and Clarke, (2021). Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I *not* use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Couns Psychother Res.* 2021; 21: 37– 47.
Gotowiec et al (2022). Understanding patient empowerment along the hearing health journey. *International Journal of Audiology*, 61(2), 148-158
Zimmerman, B. J. (1995). Self-regulation involves more than metacognition: A social cognitive perspective. *Educational psychologist*, 30(4), 217-221