



Better Hearing with Cochlear Implants: Studies at the Research Triangle Institute

Blake Wilson, Michael F. Dorman

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Better Hearing with Cochlear Implants provides a comprehensive account of a decades-long research effort to improve cochlear implants (CIs). The research was conducted primarily at the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) in North Carolina, USA, and the results provided key pillars in the foundation for the present-day devices. Although many of these results were reported in journal articles and other publications, many others were only reported in Quarterly and Final Progress Reports for the National Institutes of Health, which supported the RTI effort. In addition, the Progress Reports provided details that could not be included in the publications. The book is an annotated compilation of the most important sections from the most important reports that gives readers access to previously unpublished data and also a broad and logically organized overview of the research. Four main sections are included to describe the major lines of investigation: design and evaluation of novel processing strategies; electrical stimulation on both sides with CIs; combined electric and acoustic stimulation of the auditory system; and representations of temporal information with CIs. Large advances were made in each of these areas, and readers will appreciate the significance of the research and how the different areas related to each other. Each main section includes an introduction by the authors followed by two or more chapters, and the first chapter in the book describes the work conducted at the RTI in the context of the multiple other efforts worldwide.

The book may be used as a primary text on CIs, and it can serve as a multifaceted reference for physicians, audiologists, neuroscientists, designers of neural prostheses, and scientists and other specialists whose work is aimed at the remediation of hearing loss.

In all, a fascinating history is presented, which began with little or no speech recognition with CIs for any user and ended with high levels of speech recognition for the great majority of users, including the ability to converse with ease via cell phones. This is a long trip in a short time, and historians of science and technological developments will be interested in knowing how such a rapid development was possible, and about the twists and turns on the way to the destination.

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