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New hearing test takes just seconds

A REVOLUTIONARY new hearing test that produces accurate results in seconds could soon be available for use in GP surgeries, workplaces and schools.

Current tests take around 25 minutes to carry out at a specialist clinic.

The new hand-held device tests how the inner ear responds to different frequencies and volumes. 'It's rather like projecting sound onto a wall and monitoring the echo,' said a spokesman for Sensurial, the Oxfordshire-based company behind the device.

Each portable unit costs £500 — far cheaper than a large hospital-based laboratory with conventional equipment which can cost as much as £20,000.

Pre-clinical trials have been positive; formal trials will begin this year at Heartlands hospital in Birmingham.