

SPRING
2011

The Hearing Report

The Newsletter of Audiology Services, Inc 617-484-8700

90 Concord Avenue
Belmont MA 02478

audiology.services@verizon.net
audiologyservicesinc.com

A new study from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Center of Aging and Health has found that 63% of study participants over age 70 had hearing loss, ranging from mild to severe. The study also found that only 20% of the participants used hearing aids, and only 3 % of those with mild hearing loss used hearing aids.

They are currently planning another study to find out if hearing aid use can prevent some of the health problems that are strongly linked to hearing loss: cognitive decline, dementia, and poorer physical functioning.

“ What used to be my most difficult listening situation has become my easiest” : L.P., experienced hearing aid user about cell phone use with his new Oticon hearing aids and streamer

DIRECTIONAL HEARING AIDS

Not too many years ago, hearing aid microphones were predominately “omni-directional” meaning that sounds came into the hearing aid from all directions equally in all environments. In a quiet environment, this worked fine but in noisy environments, the noise could be overpowering. Hearing aid engineers have been developing better and better directional responses using two microphones to improve listening in background noise. It is now becoming standard for most models of hearing aids to have two microphones so that a directional response is possible. When the hearing aid is in the directional mode, the sound from the rear or to the sides is reduced, so that the sound coming from the front stands out more.

In quiet environments, the omni-directional pattern is still preferred for sound quality and safety. When in noise, the directional pattern can either be

switched into with a manual program button, or more commonly, automatically turned on when the hearing aid computer judges the noise level to be high enough.

The best results come from using two hearing aids with directional responses. Also, behind the ear hearing aids tend to give a greater directional benefit because of a greater distance between the microphones. The width of the “focus” depends on the hearing aid and the ambient noise.



The in-office programming of the directional response is important as is advantageous seating when in noise. When using directional microphones, it is important to have as much of the background noise to the rear and to face the person talking.

Turn Down The TV Commercials!

We hear that phrase over and over again. Now there's good news! President Obama signed into law the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (CALM) Act in December 2010. The FCC is now responsible for regulating volume of commercials. The standard that has been adopted was developed by the Advanced Television Systems Committee and would eliminate obtrusively loud TV commercials that grab the viewer's attention by boosting the volume over the surrounding programs.

Cable operators and broadcasters have one year to comply. However, small cable operators, broadcast stations, or video programming distributors may seek a waiver if they can show that complying would create a financial hardship.

Spring Update:

The Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act (S.905) has again been re-introduced into the US senate. This bill has no restrictions on age or income for the \$500 tax credit. An earlier bill introduced into the House last month does contain age and income qualifications. Call or write your legislator to support this bill.

Dr. Andrea Simonson attended the American Academy of Audiology held in March in Chicago. This is a three day annual convention with educational programs and manufacturer's exhibits, including the introduction of new technology.

May is Better Hearing Month. As the Johns Hopkins study shows (on reverse), only a small percentage of people with hearing loss use hearing aids. If you know someone with hearing loss, encourage them to be tested, so they know what their options are.

HAPPY SPRING TO ALL!!!

Jean T. Rosowski, Au.D., CCC-A

Gayle Robert Nye, Au.D., CCC-A

Andrea M. Simonson, Ph.D., CCC-A

Audiologists