

Associated Hearing PROFESSIONALS



Farewell from Rob

"It is with mixed emotions that I am writing to inform you that I have accepted a position with the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Since leaving my post as an active duty Air Force Officer five years ago, I have continued to feel the need to serve our

country's veterans, and this is a great opportunity to do so. It has been a great pleasure providing your hearing health-care needs, and it is not easy for me to give it up. I will be available for consultation for the next several weeks, and will entrust your

future care to audiologists Dr. Margaret Juelich and Tina McWhorter. I have greatly valued our relationship, your loyalty and friendship over the years. Best wishes for your future health."

Sincerely,
Robert P. Noble, AuD



Margaret Fritsch Juelich AuD
Robert Noble AuD
Tina McWhorter MA
Lesley Schopper

Preparing for a Hospital Stay

Communication difficulties caused by a hearing loss can add to the stress of a hospital setting. Because hearing loss is invisible, doctors, nurses, and other staff members may not be aware of a patient's hearing difficulties. Pro-active, clear communication is essential between the patient, family, and healthcare providers.

Be sure to inform the admissions office, nursing station, and staff around you that you have a hearing loss. You could ask that the

International Symbol for Hearing Impairment be placed on your hospital chart and door.

Hearing aids could get lost during a hospital stay. Some patients choose to use older, spare aids, if available, rather than their newer ones during a hospital admission. When you remove your aids for procedures or sleeping, always place them in a hard case or drying jar clearly marked with your name. If you use the extended wear

devices, be sure to notify the staff.

Ask for assistive listening devices or bring your own for the television or telephone. You could always use the closed captioning on the television.

Finally, try to have a family member or friend with you when talking with medical staff, to be sure you understand everything. An extra set of ears is valuable in this situation and that person could take notes for you.

Page 2

Hearing Loss and Aging

Music Training

Student Update

Lost and Found



Hearing Loss and Healthy Aging

The relationship between hearing loss and healthy aging continues to be studied and research data continues to suggest a connection between hearing loss and cognitive decline.

According to Frank r. Lin, MD, PhD, two thirds of adults have a clinically significant hearing loss by the time they are 70. His group found that older adults with hearing loss had a 24-percent higher risk of cognitive impairment compared with normal-hearing subjects. The hearing impaired patients experienced cognitive decline sooner as well.

The study showed an association

between cognitive decline and hearing loss but does not prove that hearing loss causes decreased mental capacity.

Dr. Lin's research group found that hearing loss was independently associated with new cases of dementia. More than one third of the risk for dementia related to hearing loss for people over the age of 60.

Karen Cruickshanks, PhD is a researcher who studies the health problems of aging. "It seems that how well the brain interprets sensory signals, whether sound, light, or odors, may be an important indication of cognitive func-

tion. It isn't clear whether these associations mean that sensory disorders cause cognitive changes or whether the damage in sensory systems and cognitive functions are caused by the same factors, such as inflammation, vascular damage, or the accumulation of certain proteins in several regions of the brain."

It would be easy to over-interpret the information and assume that hearing aids could prevent dementia. More importantly, the use of technology will help all people with hearing loss, including those with dementia, to maintain communication and social interaction for well-being.



Lost and Found

There is woman's coat hanging in the waiting room that has been there for quite a while. It is a Jones New York black pea coat, with no size tag. If you are missing a coat, please give us a call.

Music Training for Better Hearing in Noise

Emerging new studies suggest that long-term training in music may result in the development of superior auditory skills. These skills could provide benefit beyond music to include perception of speech in noise and auditory cognitive abilities, such as memory and attention span.

One theory is described as the **OPERA** hypothesis:

Overlap: There is an overlap in the auditory system for speech and music.

Precision: Music processing re-

quires more precision than speech processing.

Emotions: Strong emotions elicited by music may activate the brain's rewards centers, maintaining what is called "plasticity" in the brain. Plasticity has been described as the ability of the brain to change when you learn something new.

Repetition: Extensive practice tunes the auditory system.

Attention: Playing a musical instrument requires focused attention to the details of sound.

Another study indicated that adults age 60-85 without any previous musical experience showed improved speed in auditory processing and memory after just three months of weekly half hour piano lessons and three hours of practice per week.

More research is needed, but music training may prove to be a useful auditory rehabilitation tool for older adults who would like to hear better in noise.

Student Update

Congratulations to our extern Ryan Farris! Not only did Ryan get married on December 22, but he also just completed his externship and successfully defended his research. In May Ryan will graduate from the University of Illinois and begin his career as a Doctor of Audiology!

Ryan has been interviewing for various positions and is considering job offers. He may return to his hometown of Springfield, Illinois or settle in the St. Louis area. If so, we hope he stops in to visit on occasion. Best of luck to Ryan and his wife Lesley on this exciting chapter in their lives!

