

# Hearing Health Matters!



Ontario Association of Professional Audiology Clinics

Your Hearing Deserves An Audiologist

## What you should know about Hearing Loss and Dementia

As the relationship between hearing loss and dementia is receiving increased attention, greater emphasis is being placed on hearing health. When results of diagnostic audiological assessments are positive, and aural rehabilitation includes amplification, physicians should encourage their patients to seek treatment. It is important for your patient to understand the risks if they ignore hearing loss – dangers that include certain life-threatening co-morbidities.

Multiple studies indicate that hearing loss can be linked to the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. In one study, Frank Lin, MD, PhD, (2013), evaluated the progression of hearing loss in relation to cognitive function in 1,984 adults (mean age 77.4 years) over a period of 6 years. Dr. Lin concluded: "...there is little doubt that hearing loss is a factor in loss of mental acuity in older adults. (2013)<sup>1</sup>

Hélène Amieva, PhD followed 3,670 adults, age 65 and older and compared the course of cognitive decline among older adults who were wearing hearing aids and those who were not. The results showed no difference in the rate of cognitive decline between a control group of people (no reported hearing loss) and people with hearing loss who used hearing aids. "By contrast, untreated hearing loss was significantly associated with lower baseline scores on the Mini-Mental State Examination, a well-established test of cognitive function, during the 25-year follow-up period, independent of age, gender, and education time." (2015)<sup>2</sup>

**These studies show "...just how important it is for physicians to discuss hearing with their patients and to be proactive in addressing any hearing declines over time." (2013)<sup>3</sup>**



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(<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/profiles/results/directory/profile/8389751/frank-lin>)

Frank Robert Lin, MD, PhD



Researcher in the Neuropsychology and Epidemiology of Aging at the University of Bordeaux, France.

(<http://www.hearingreview.com/2015/10/new-study-shows-hearing-aids-reduce-risk-of-cognitive-decline-in-older-adults/#sthash.N8C2kf11.dpuf>)

Hélène Amieva, PhD Neurosciences and Neuropharmacology

## References

1. Johns Hopkins Medicine. Hearing Loss Accelerates Brain Function Decline in Older Adults. 2013 ([http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_accelerates\\_brain\\_function\\_decline\\_in\\_older\\_adults](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_accelerates_brain_function_decline_in_older_adults))
2. <http://www.hearingreview.com/2015/10/new-study-shows-hearing-aids-reduce-risk-of-cognitive-decline-in-older-adults/#sthash.N8C2kf11.dpuf>)
3. Johns Hopkins Medicine. Hearing Loss Accelerates Brain Function Decline in Older Adults. 2013 ([http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_accelerates\\_brain\\_function\\_decline\\_in\\_older\\_adults](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_accelerates_brain_function_decline_in_older_adults))
4. University of Pennsylvania – Perelman School of Medicine, Jonathan Peele, PhD. 2011 ([www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/08/110831115946.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/08/110831115946.htm))

**Greater emphasis is being placed on hearing health.**



"Declines in hearing abilities may accelerate gray matter atrophy and increase the listening effort necessary to comprehend speech. Hearing aids may not only improve hearing but preserve the brain." (2011)<sup>4</sup>

**The Ontario Association of Professional Audiology Clinics (OAPAC)** represents independent audiology practices in Ontario.

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