

A SIMPLE GUIDE

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Dear Readers,

Selamat Hari Raya & Happy Vesak Day to those who are celebrating!

I hope you are relishing on the recent relaxation of social distancing rules and are doing some well-deserved catching up with friends and loved ones.

In this issue, we touch on an important part of communication in socialising – your hearing. Did you know that half a billion people around the world suffer from mild hearing loss and often it takes 15 years for someone with hearing loss to seek help? Read on to find out more about different types of hearing loss and the current help that is available!

By Dr Linsey Utami Gani
ECHO Programme Director



CLINICIAN'S SHARING

ALL ABOUT HEARING LOSS & HEARING AIDS

This newsletter is jointly brought to you by:

All About Hearing Loss & Hearing Aids

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About half a billion people around the world suffer from at least a mild degree of hearing loss.¹ Untreated hearing loss can have a great impact on our daily lives and could lead to issues like cognitive decline and social isolation.²

Hearing is one of our very important five senses but commonly neglected by us. The average time taken for people to identify that they have a significant hearing loss to the time they seek help is about 15 years.²

There are three main types of hearing loss namely conductive hearing loss (CHL), sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL) and mixed hearing loss (MHL).

CHL occurs mainly due to problems like impacted wax, infection or perforated eardrum and most of the time, when treated early, the hearing loss is reversible. SNHL occurs mainly due to problems like aging, ototoxic medications or prolong exposure to noise. Most of the time, SNHL is irreversible. MHL results from a combination of factors contributing to CHL and SNHL.



One of the most common management for hearing loss patients is hearing aids. Hearing aids are electronic devices designed to help people with hearing loss hear better.

A hearing aid consists of three parts, namely:

- 1) Microphone, which helps in the collection of sounds.
- 2) Amplifier, which amplifies the sounds collected by the microphone.
- 3) Receiver (speaker) which sends the amplified sounds to the ears.



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Hearing aids come in different styles. A Behind the Ear (BTE) hearing aid consists of a hearing aid with hook hung behind the ear, connected to an ear mould (which goes into the ear) via a tubing.



A custom-made hearing aid is worn in the ear, size usually dependent on factors like degree of hearing loss and size of ear canal.



A Receiver in Canal (RIC) hearing aid consists of a hearing aid (usually smaller) hung behind the ear and a thin cable receiver, which goes into the ear canal.



It was found that among adults aged 70 and older with hearing loss who could benefit from hearing aids, fewer than one third has ever worn hearing aids. This number is even lower (approx. 16%) among adults aged 20-69.³

The consequences of untreated hearing loss is far more than what most people would have known. Therefore, do not procrastinate, do see a doctor or participate in functional screening events in your neighbourhood if you suspect that you might have any type of hearing loss and get proper treatment or management as soon as possible.

References

1. The Growing—and Now Alarming—Burden of Hearing Loss Worldwide

Tucci, Debara L. M.D., M.S., M.B.A.; Wilson, Blake S. Ph.D.; O'Donoghue, Gerard M. F.R.C.S.

2. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robinseatonjefferson/2019/11/29/5-things-you-may-not-know-about-hearing-aids/?sh=7996fd55456c>

3. Based on calculations by NIDCD Epidemiology and Statistics Program staff using data collected by (1) the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) annually for number of persons who have ever used a hearing aid [numerator], and (2) periodic NHANES hearing exams for representative samples of the U.S. adult and older adult population [denominator]; these statistics are also used for tracking Healthy People 2010 and 2020 objectives.



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A SingHealth community programme



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For more enquiries, visit <https://www.singhealth.com.sg/rhs/health-up>

SingHealth

Defining Tomorrow's Medicine



Mild to Moderate Medical Conditions?

Your GP can **treat it!**



The GPFirst Programme is an initiative by Changi General Hospital's A&E Department in partnership with over 170 participating GP clinics in eastern Singapore.

Patients with mild to moderate symptoms are encouraged to seek treatment at the GP clinics first instead of going to the A&E.

Should the patient be referred by his or her GP via GPFirst, he or she will:

- ✓ Be accorded higher priority over non-emergency cases
- ✓ Receive a \$50 subsidy* on the prevailing attendance fee at CGH A&E

For more information, visit www.GPFirst.sg

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