

Absenteeism Higher Among Hearing Impaired People

The extra energy expended on overcoming hearing problems takes its toll on hearing-impaired employees. This may explain why hearing-impaired employees are likely to take more sick-days than their colleagues with normal hearing. However, a few common sense precautions have been shown to help hearing-impaired employees perform as reliably as their colleagues.

Hearing problems can wear on a hearing-impaired individual's mental health. A Dutch survey among people in the workplace found that hearing-impaired employees are five times more likely than their co-workers with normal hearing to experience stress so severe that they must take sick-days.

More than 75% of the hearing-impaired respondents had called in sick during the preceding year, as compared to 55% of their colleagues with normal hearing. One in four of the hearing-impaired respondents cite stress and burn-out as the reasons for calling in sick, as compared to just 7% of those with normal hearing. Neither age nor gender affected the number of sick-days.

The survey included responses from 150 hearing impaired employees and 60 with normal hearing from various workplaces in Holland.

According to common experience, hearing-impaired employees are able to perform at the same level and reliability as their colleagues with normal hearing when certain conditions are met. Generally, affected individuals must recognize their hearing loss, appropriate technical assistance must be made available in the workplace for hearing impaired employees, and there must be an open dialogue about the hearing issue between hearing impaired employees, their colleagues and management.

For answers about prevention, diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss, contact Comprehensive Ear & Hearing or visit our website at www.CompEarHear.com.

Source: Hear-It.org, Also see: Kramer SE, Kapteyn TS, Houtgast T. Occupational performance: Comparing normally-hearing and hearing-impaired employees using the Amsterdam Checklist for Hearing and Work. Intl J Audiol. 2006;45(9):503-512.

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