

## Treating hearing loss could mean reducing the risk of dementia, new study confirms.

Hearing loss may increase the risk for dementia, but using hearing aids lowers the risk, so it is similar to those without hearing loss, according to a study published recently in The Lancet.

**“Early adoption of hearing aids could help people hold onto their jobs, communicate better at home with family and friends, and remain active their communities,”** said Lise

Hamlin, public policy director of the Hearing Loss Association of America.



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Carli Van Harken, HIS, Owner of Comprehensive Ear & Hearing

Researchers followed over 430,000 people from the UK Biobank, an extensive biomedical database and research resource that follows residents long term. They looked at each person’s risk for dementia, self-reported use of hearing aids, and medical records to see if the person developed dementia, the study said.

The paper also explores some possible reasons as to how hearing aids may work, tending to favor the idea that they are effective because they reduce the cognitive effort involved in hearing and/or the effects of sensory deprivation from hearing loss.

**“The evidence is building that hearing loss may be the most impactful modifiable risk factor for dementia in mid-life,”** corresponding study author Dongshan Zhu, professor at Shandong University in China, said in a statement. “Our study provides the best evidence to date to suggest that hearing aids could be a minimally invasive, cost-effective treatment to mitigate the potential impact of hearing loss on dementia.” The study found that **those with hearing loss who used hearing aids had a similar risk of developing dementia to those without hearing loss.**

### Under-use of hearing aids

**“Many adults need hearing aids, but only about 15% of US adults with hearing loss use them,”** says Carli Van Harken, HIS, Owner of Comprehensive Ear & Hearing. “With the publicity this new study is receiving, we are seeing more people come into our office for a hearing checkup because they want to prevent dementia. We need to use studies like this to encourage patients not to be embarrassed by hearing problems,” she said, “and to seek testing and treatment sooner rather than later.”

**“With both hearing loss and dementia, acting sooner is better,”** said Lise Hamlin, public policy director of the Hearing Loss Association of America. “Early adoption of hearing aids could help people hold onto their jobs, communicate better at home with family and friends, and remain active their communities,” she said.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(23\)00048-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(23)00048-8/fulltext)

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- Consultations and recommendations
- Treatment for hearing loss