



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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September and December by CHHA – North Shore Branch,
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Editor: Hugh Hetherington Issue 105 June 2019

Mountain Ear

From the Desk of the President

As we move into June, a reminder that the month of May was Hearing Awareness Month. I want to take this opportunity to remind you how important our hearing is and that we need to take care of it. At the end of the month I am off to Montreal to attend the CHHA National Conference where people from across the country will gather to take part in discussions and to hear presentations from professionals and hearing loss advocates about all aspects of hearing loss. Prevention is key because hearing loss cannot be cured but only prevented. You should be concerned about your hearing and make sure you protect it by avoiding noisy situations, listening to loud music at concerts or through earbuds, and wearing ear protection when necessary. It is also a good time to schedule a hearing test to find out your own situation. This can be done by scheduling an appointment at any of your local hearing clinics.

Did you go to the recent Caregiver & Senior Expo, May 4th, at Delbrook Recreation Centre?



It was very interesting, and members should make the attempt to visit this annual event next year. It covers all sorts of services for all people who may have reached that certain age.

Alan Dion (left) John Mai (right)

I was there, trying to spread the word that we, at CHHA — North Shore Branch are here and ready to

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June Presentation

Monday, June 17, 2019
7:00 pm at the Summerhill
135 West 15th Street,
North Vancouver

Guest Speaker

Glen Grigg, Ph.D., R.C.C.

Is a practicing Psychotherapist,
a professor of Psychology at City University
of Seattle in Vancouver,
and a Consultant to Several Health Authorities

Topic

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Coping with Hearing Loss
is the Problem”**

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help. Not knowing in advance that the event was on, I went along with some brochures and was kindly offered space by John Mai, RHIP on the “Amplifon” table. For those of you who may not know, Amplifon is the new name of the “Miracle Ear” organization.

Like most of the hearing aid clinics on the North Shore Amplifon prominently display our brochures in their offices. We at CHHA appreciate this so when you are visiting your clinic, let them know that you appreciate their doing so.

In our next issue of the newsletter I will tell you more about my trip to the Conference.

Hear Well and Happy Summer!

Alan Dion

April Presentation

by Hugh Hetherington

Sonova, Phonak’s parent company introduced their new Phonak Audéo Marvel® hearing aid last Fall. Operating on their new SWORD platform (Sonova Wireless One Radio Digital chip) this hearing aid appears to be leading the way into the future with new connectivity features that hearing aids now will be able to perform making our future friendlier.

To tell us more about the new Marvel hearing aid models, we invited Daryl Houghton, Phonak’s Regional Sales Manager to speak at our April 15th presentation at the Summerhill in North Vancouver. In the future all major hearing aid manufacturers will be providing more connectivity through our smartphones and the Internet to undertake tasks previously unimagined for hearing aids. Daryl mentioned that in a few years almost everyone may be wearing something in their ears. Apart from a hearing aid it may be a GPS device, a translation device, music player or something not thought of yet. Much of this capability can now be built right into our hearing aids. While he mentioned that these features may not be for everyone, manufacturers are at the same time making great strides in improving the performance of hearing aids in the every day situations that we encounter, such as, improvement in background noise, better clarity of sound, more dy-

namic range for music and the ability to self adjust for the different environments we encounter in our daily lives.

He mentioned that these innovations are happening across the industry. When asked about where to buy a hearing he said that while some people may have brand loyalty your hearing professional is the best person to help you select the hearing aid that is right for you. He stressed that rather than brand of hearing aid, it is better to find a good hearing professional that you like as you will be working with them over the life of your hearing aid and often longer. As to how to go about finding one, ask someone you know to recommend one or become involved with CHHA where you will meet with others who have already been through the process.

Daryl showed us a short video clip demonstrating some of the present and future capabilities we will come to expect from our hearing aids. The video shows a man sitting in a coffee shop with new hearing aids. He is video chatting with his audiologist regarding making an adjustment to the hearing aids to improve the background noise. She accomplishes this for him wirelessly and suggests a follow up appointment for him. While walking to the station to meet his wife and daughter, he chats with a concierge service hands-free to find a restaurant and books a reservation. On the way he is guided wirelessly by GPS navigation from the coffee shop to the station. He stops in at a flower shop to purchase flowers and uses his smartphone app to translate the store assistant’s foreign language into English through his hearing aids. As he waits at the station he uses his smartphone to connect to one of the station’s video displays to put up a welcome message for his wife. At the station he hears his wife and daughter approaching before they are in his sight through the remote Roger® microphone his daughter is wearing. If you would like you can view this video at: www.phonakpro.com/com/en/campaign/sword-future.html.

The new Phonak Marvel models introduced last fall and this spring already have some of the features described in the video. While not alone in what you might call the revolutionary future of hearing aids, the Marvel has introduced some capabilities, such as, total hands-free calling with both ears from any iOS or Android smartphone, or indeed any older

Bluetooth enabled hearing aid. In the past much of the hearing aid emphasis was on made for iPhone hearing aids. With the Marvel, when you receive a phone call from your cell phone, you will be able to answer the call with a simple quick push of the button on your hearing aid. A longer push on the button will disconnect the call when you are finished. The button will also allow you to raise or lower the volume, as needed.

With the Audéo Marvel series, Phonak have introduced a multifunctional hearing aid incorporating many of the new features discussed in the video and making way to adding additional capability through upgrades in the future. Sound quality should be exceptional right from the very first fit. There should be better speech understanding in noise while also reducing the listening effort in noisy situations.

The Marvel uses a newer version of Phonak's automatic program Autosense 3.0 to automatically adjust your hearing aids seamlessly as you move from one hearing environment to another with over 200 automatically selected programs. Your hearing professional can also add additional manually selected programs for special needs that you might have, such as, a musician who plays an instrument or just a special situation that you frequently encounter that the automatic adjustment doesn't fulfill.

Looking at connectivity the Marvel will allow you to stream audio to both ears in stereo from any iOS, Android or Bluetooth enabled phone. The hearing aids will detect whether the streamed sound is voice or music and automatically adjust to provide the correct dynamic range and audio quality for each without user intervention. To put it in other words your hearing aids will become stereo headphones perfectly adjusted to suit your individual hearing loss. You will be able to listen to music, podcasts, videos, ebooks and possibly more.

Through a separate device called the Phonak TV Connector, you are able to stream the sound from your TV set wirelessly to both hearing aids, again in full stereo. When the TV is on and you are within range your hearing aids will automatically connect and you will hear the TV sound directly in your hearing aids. Should a phone call arrive on your cell phone while watching TV, the phone will take pref-

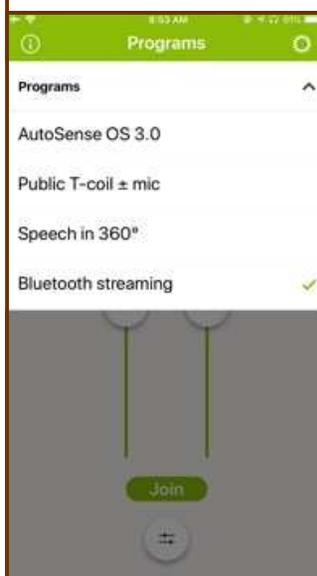
erence over the TV and return you to the TV signal when you are finished talking.



Future capability will be available in late 2019 with an upgrade which will allow wireless connection to Phonak's Roger® system without an additional external receiver. The Roger system will permit you to

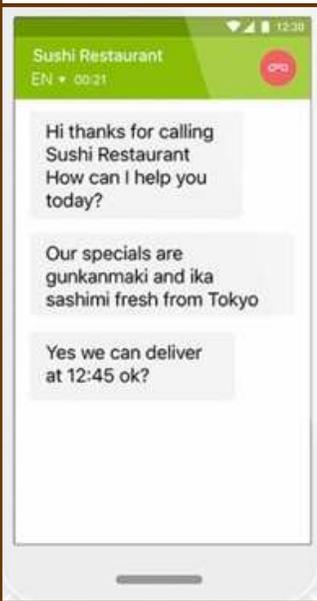
use a range of Roger remote microphones that extend your hearing needs, should you require it, to listening from a distance or in exceptionally noisy places. Your hearing aids can then be used with Roger personal devices, such as, the famed Roger Pen® or the Roger Select® table microphone.

As well as being available in a 312 size battery model, a 13 size battery model and a 13 size battery model with telecoil, Marvel is now also available in a rechargeable battery model. Later in 2019 Phonak will also be releasing a rechargeable telecoil model. Its built-in lithium ion battery is engineered to last for 6 years and will provide a full day of listening including cell phone use and streaming on a single overnight charge. You put the hearing aids in the charging case at night and remove them in the morning fully charged. Removing them from the case automatically turns them on. Should you require a quick charge at any time, 20 minutes of charging will give you eight hours of use.



There are also a number of smartphone app's available bringing additional capabilities to your hearing aids. Firstly, there is a Phonak "Remote" app that will allow you to control the volume of your hearing aids or manually select additional programs, such as, the telecoil or any manual programs that have been programmed into your aids.

There is also a support “myPhonak” app that will allow you to video chat with your hearing professional and have adjustments made wirelessly at home or even when you are away on vacation. Daryl mentioned that there are now 15 clinics with more to come already set up in B.C. to do remote programming. He says it has really taken off in Northern B.C. where people often have to travel great distances to visit a hearing clinic.



A “myCall-to-Text” app is also available that will be useful for people with severe and profound hearing losses. It would also be useful for taking phone calls in very noisy places. It uses a paid transcription service to display on your phone what the party on the other end says in real time and the transcriptions can be saved for later review. Calls can be made to any type of phone, mobile or landline and the person called does not have to

have the app installed. Live transcriptions of the calls can be in more than 80 languages. The price for the service in Canada is \$7.99 a month for 1 hour of captioned calls to landlines or mobile and \$39.99 a month for unlimited captioned calls. In both plans calls between “myCall-to-Text” users and incoming calls are unlimited. The service only requires 3G/4G/5G cell service or a WiFi connection. There is apparently also a discount for Marvel hearing aid users.

To end his presentation, Daryl took the time to answer many questions from the audience most of which are answered above. We thank Daryl for taking the time to come and give us this interesting and informative presentation.

(The following article is reprinted here with permission and is from the blog section of the website www.hearinglosshelp.com where you will find many more interesting articles. Neil Bauman, Ph.D. is a hearing loss coping skills expert and the owner of the website from which the articles are taken.)

Hearing Loss and Dementia

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.

© August, 2018

Dementia linked to hearing loss has been in the news quite a bit lately. The media hype has left some hard of hearing people feeling that they’ll end up with dementia simply because they now have a hearing loss—as though hearing loss has to result in dementia. Furthermore, some less than ethical hearing professionals have used this hype as scare tactics in order to try to sell more hearing aids.

To be sure, there is a kernel of truth in the news that there is a link between hearing loss and dementia. Therefore, let’s look at the results of some studies and put the results into proper perspective.

In one study, researchers identified nine modifiable higher-risk factors that they statistically linked to dementia. Of these factors, hearing loss is ranked number one. Those are the facts. However, the devil is in the details.

First, there are two broad categories of factors that cause dementia—those that we have no control over, and those that we have some control over.

The larger group, composed of factors we have no control over, such as aging and family history, comprise a whopping 65% of the total risk of getting dementia. These non-modifiable risk factors are obviously much more significant than hearing loss—only one of the 9 modifiable risk factors.

The nine modifiable risk factors that researchers have identified as contributing 35% in total to dementia (in order from greatest to least) are: hearing loss (9%), low-level of education (8%), smoking (5%), depression (4%), physical inactivity (3%), hypertension (2%), social isolation (2%), obesity (1%) and Type II diabetes (1%).

These figures show the percentage reduction in new cases of dementia if this risk factor is eliminated. As you can see, most of these factors are lifestyle-related issues and, as such, we have considerable control over them if we choose to do so.

I find three observations of some note in this research.

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1. The risk of uncorrected hearing loss only contributes 9% to an increased risk in getting dementia. Although this is a significant increase in risk, it is still only 9%. We're not talking a 90% increase in risk just because you have an uncorrected hearing loss. Thus, if you have a hearing loss, dementia isn't a sure thing, or even a likely thing. You don't even have a 10% chance of getting it just because you have a hearing loss.

Therefore, don't let people scare you into getting hearing aids before you are ready to do so—but do get and wear hearing aids as they will likely make your life easier and less stressful.

2. Researchers lumped these nine risk factors into three groups, depending at what stage of life they occur.

Early life – low-level of education

Mid-life – hearing loss, hypertension, obesity

Later life – smoking, depression, physical inactivity, social isolation, diabetes.

Note that this study identified hearing loss that occurs in mid-life as the hearing loss risk factor for dementia.

This means that this risk factor does not apply to those of us who were born with severe hearing losses or acquired hearing losses in early childhood. It appears that hearing loss in early life is not a risk factor for dementia. It's only when you acquire a hearing loss later in life that hearing loss becomes a significant factor.

Therefore, if you were born deaf or with a hearing loss, you don't have to worry that you were sentenced at birth to having dementia later in life. That is not what this study revealed, so you can set your mind at rest in this regard.

3. Note that mid-life hearing loss in itself is not a risk factor for dementia, it is uncorrected mid-life hearing loss. A large study found that the group that used hearing aids did not experience the cognitive decline (dementia) that the non-hearing aid group did.

Thus, the good news is that if you lose hearing during mid-life and choose to correct this by wearing hearing aids, you can reduce your risk of getting dementia by 9%. At the same time, don't ignore the other 8 factors. By addressing each of them you can reduce your risk of dementia by one third!

You may be wondering how uncorrected hearing loss contributes to dementia. There are at least three main factors.

First, it can add to your cognitive load. In other words, your brain has to work harder to try and decipher speech. Thus, you have fewer mental resources left to think about what people are saying and analyzing what is going on around you.

Second, it can lead to social disengagement. In other words, if it's too hard to try and understand what people are saying, you tune out. Ultimately, you no longer put yourself in such social situations and largely may become a recluse.

Third, because of being cut off from those around you, you may become depressed.

All of these can contribute to accelerated cognitive decline into dementia. Correcting your hearing loss with hearing aids can reverse this downward spiral.

It appears that this is because wearing hearing aids reduces your cognitive load in trying to understand speech. As a result, you'll find that when you are wearing your hearing aids, you'll find socializing easier. Therefore, you will not disengage and tune out as much, and as a result, you'll not be depressed.

In contrast, adults with untreated hearing loss report greater stress, increased social isolation and poor family relationships.

The take away from all of this is that you need to remain active both physically and mentally, live a healthy lifestyle, and if you develop a hearing loss by all means get and wear properly-fitted hearing aids. Also, take advantage of all assistive devices to help you communicate better under difficult listening situations. This could be as simple as turning on the captions on your TV so that you can read the words that your ears miss.

When you do this, your future need not be any less exciting and fulfilling. It may just be a bit different as you make allowances for your hearing loss—but definitely worth it!

Hampton, Dennis. 2018. "Nine Risk Factors Associated with Dementia". In: *The Hearing Review*, Vol. 25, No. 8, August 2018. p. 22.

Vancouver Community College Fall Speechreading Courses

Registration is now open for Fall Speechreading courses! The Speechreading course promotes skill development and attitudinal change towards communicating with a hearing loss. Participants, including individuals who have hearing loss and their partners, reflect on how hearing loss affects communication. The course allows the students the opportunity to create more effective personal communication, to identify and select communication strategies and tools, to increase self-confidence levels, and to become more effective at self-advocacy. The students also practice speechreading: they detect differences in mouth movements, discriminate and identify visual aspects of speech, and incorporate visual information with what they hear with the goal of improving personal communication.

Students will learn:

- Advantages and limitations of speechreading
- How to combine what you see with what you hear
- How to identify factors that affect your ability to communicate
- How to use a variety of strategies to communicate more effectively
- How to behave assertively in difficult situations
- Tips for stress reduction and relaxation

The class meets for 2.5 hours, once per week, for 12 weeks. This Fall, we have two time options and two locations available:

Monday afternoon, 1:00pm-3:30pm

Dates: Sept. 16 - Dec. 2 (no classes Oct. 14th and Nov. 11th) Location: Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre, North Vancouver

Tuesday afternoon, 1:00pm-3:30pm

Dates: Sept. 17 - Dec. 3 Location: Vancouver Community College (Broadway Campus), Vancouver

Tuition and fees for the course are \$270.05, but a senior tuition waiver is available for those 65 and over (Cost will be \$93.40.)

For more information, or to request registration forms, contact Lisa Dillon Edgett: 604-871-7348 or ldillonedgett@vcc.ca

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association or CHHA – North Shore Branch.

Sound Advice

Presented by:
**The Canadian Hard of Hearing
Association
North Shore Branch
Now at 2 Locations**

**When we meet, we discuss topics
and issues dealing with hearing loss.
We look forward to seeing you there.
Bring a friend, a family member,
they are welcome too.**

**The group meets on the First
Friday of each month
from 10:00 AM to 11:30 at the
West Vancouver Seniors'
Centre's Social Rec Room.**

**We also meet on the Fourth
Monday of each month
From 10:00 AM to 11:30
at the Silver Harbour Seniors'
Centre In North Vancouver
in the Card Room**

(No meetings in July & August)

**Subjects to be addressed include:
Technology;
Speechreading;
Coping Strategies;
Improving Hearing Environments**

**For Information call:
604-926-5222**