

Happy New Year!

Chapter Calendar

January 12 at 4:00 In-person socializing at Hof's Hut

January 25 at Noon
Board meeting on Zoom

February 9 at 4:00 In-person socializing at Hof's Hut

Lip reading: Wednesdays, 9:00-11:30 a.m. at Weingart Center.

Join us on Jan. 12 for our first social meeting of 2023!

Join our monthly social meeting at the Los Altos Hof's Hut. We've reserved space on the patio, away from street noise. Patio heaters are available if it's chilly.

As always, we can show you how to use your smartphone to caption the conversation. We hope to see you!

4:00 pm, Thursday, January 12
Hof's Hut, 2147 Bellflower Blvd., LB
Free parking in the lot behind the restaurant

Cut dementia risk by testing for and then treating hearing loss

*Yishane Lee, Hearing Health Foundation
December 9, 2022*

In 2011 a groundbreaking study by Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D., and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University showed that even a mild untreated hearing loss (not being able to hear a whisper) doubled the risk for dementia, with severe untreated hearing loss associated with a five-fold greater risk. Since then, there has been a growing body of evidence about the connection between hearing health and brain health. The Lancet followed up with not one but two reports (in 2017 and 2020) pointing to hearing loss as a modifiable risk factor to prevent cognitive decline and dementia.

Earlier this year, Samira Anderson, Au.D., Ph.D., a 2014 Emerging Research Grants scientist, showed that hearing aid use improved brain processing over time.

Now a December 2022 meta-analysis in JAMA Neurology shows that the use of hearing devices—hearing aids and cochlear implants—shows a quantifiable decrease in the risk of cognitive decline. (Emphasis added in all the excerpts.)

The report, by researchers in Singapore, says: "In this systematic review and multi-adjusted observational meta-analysis including 137,484 participants, the use of hearing restorative devices was associated with a 19% decrease in hazards of long-term cognitive decline such as incident dementia over a duration ranging from 2 to 25 years. Usage of these devices was also associated with a 3 percent improvement in cognitive test scores in the short term."

19%

Decrease in the risk of long-term cognitive decline associated with the use of hearing aids and cochlear implants

The short term effects included research that showed improvements in memory after just 12 weeks of hearing aid use.

Why are hearing loss and cognitive decline linked?

In the discussion of the paper, the authors note that this association refutes the common cause hypothesis—that hearing loss and cognitive decline "occur independently as a result of a common mechanism such as age-related neurodegenerative processes involving vascular burden, oxidative stress, and genetics."

**Register for Zoom meetings
from other HLAA chapters**

HLAA Peninsula Chapter

Successful Coping Strategies for People with Hearing Loss

Monday, Jan. 9, 1:30 pm PDT

Our presenter, Dr. Bauman, is a hearing loss coping skills specialist who will demonstrate how we can choose successful strategies and bypass the intuitive, but unsuccessful ones.

Join the Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84520093805?pwd=NEFqWmNHYmZTZ25XY3huQXF4WUhfUT09>

Meeting ID: 845 2009 3805
Passcode: 556179

HLAA Mission Viejo Chapter

Know Your Rights—Ask for What you Need

Tuesday, Jan 10, 11:00 am PDT

Did you know hearing loss is a disability covered under federal, state, and local civil rights laws? Join us to learn:

- What is required under the law
- What is communication access
- Where is it required to be provided

Presented by Ann Thomas.

Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkcOihrtwvEtLzoY9Sk78981-HnE2LYwig>

HLAA East Bay Chapter

Accommodations for Hearing Loss in School

Saturday, Jan. 14, 10:00 am PDT

Our speaker, David M. Grey, is principal at Grey & Grey, a law firm that provides representation to students with disabilities. Dave has extensive experience representing Deaf and hard of hearing students (DHOH), mostly in cases that involve challenging the child's school district's failure to provide adequate special education support or accommodations.

Social time at 9:30. Meeting begins 10:00. Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords—a chance to ask more questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members.

Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pduigqj0iHdQsxPNWG09wq5PENDK25zMV>



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from **Gail Morrison**

Happy New Year!

Some of you may have heard that I was in a horrible car accident in October. It was a wake-up call. My car was totaled and since I have macular degeneration, I've decided to end my driving days. I'm signed up to GoGoGrandparent, an Uber/Lyft for my life outside of Leisure World. Leisure World has a Minibus service that takes us all around Leisure World, to Clubhouse 3 where many meetings are held and also the Mall. I've yet to discover all these things new to me.

May the start of this new year be one full of adventure for you, to invent, take risks and create new things. Adventures of all kinds keep our heart beating. As we continue to meet at Hof's Hut on the second Thursday at 4:00 p.m., may this lead us to eventually meet again at Weingart to hear speakers that help us navigate help for our hearing loss.

What new adventure awaits you right now?

News from the Board

Consider serving our chapter as Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary takes minutes of the Board meetings and provides a written record to the President. Our Board continues to meet on Zoom: this means the Recording Secretary can attend the meeting in real time, or take minutes from the recording of the Zoom meeting. Please Gail if you're interested: gail7go@gmail.com



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cut dementia risk

(continued from front page)

They write, “Instead we have shown that there is a statistically significant benefit associated with hearing interventions, which could correct or prevent cognitive decline to a certain degree.”

The authors discuss the three leading theories for the connection between hearing loss and cognitive decline, and note the mechanism is likely to be multifactorial, a combination:

Cognitive load hypothesis Individuals with hearing loss “may allocate high amounts of cognitive resources for auditory perceptual processing as they perform effortful listening.... Hence, fewer cognitive resources may be allocated for executive function and other cognitive tasks, including memory encoding. Thus, hearing restorative devices may reduce cognitive burden from listening, redirecting cognitive resources back to cognitive tasks.”

3%

Improvement in cognitive test scores from the use of hearing devices after just a few months

Sensory deficit hypothesis The “lack of sensory input may lead to structural alterations, including atrophy. Imaging studies found that reduced volumes in the primary auditory cortex, whole brain, and especially the right temporal lobe were predicted by hearing impairment, and this atrophy affects cognitive ability that originates from similarly affected cortical areas.” (Dr. Lin published on the connection between hearing loss and brain atrophy, in 2014.)

Social isolation “Hearing loss may be associated with social isolation, possibly due to difficulties in following conversation that result from hearing loss, causing individuals to withdraw from social activities. Multiple prospective studies have

demonstrated strong relationships between social isolation and dementia.” The use of hearing devices can improve communication and social connectedness and reduce loneliness and isolation.

Encourage hearing assessment

While noting the study’s limitations (namely potential confounders such as education and wealth), an editorial in the same issue underscores one of the key takeaways—get hearing tested and, if needed, treat any hearing loss:

“...[W]e recommend physicians consider hearing evaluation as part of a standard dementia workup. Thanks to the recent creation of over-the-counter hearing aids, access to hearing loss treatment will increase. *Clinicians have a unique opportunity to encourage hearing assessment and, if needed, use of hearing restorative devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants.* Not only can hearing loss contribute to symptoms of dementia, such as difficulty with communication, but hearing restoration remains an active area of investigation as a potential mitigator against the slow creep of cognitive decline. *Simply put, assessment for hearing loss remains a crucial part of caring for patients with cognitive impairment.*”

The bottom line? The use of hearing aids and cochlear implants is associated with a 19 percent decline in the risk for dementia. We should be shouting this from the rooftops. We know the risks to overall health from untreated hearing loss are myriad and wide-ranging. Hearing health is brain health.

Here is an [overview of hearing tests](#), and here’s [where to start if you are considering hearing aids](#). Let’s all take care of our hearing, for life.

<https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/blogs/cut-dementia-risk-by-testing-for-and-then-treating-hearing-loss>

For more information about our chapter, visit hlaa-lb-lakewood.org

Questions? Contact us by email at info@hlaa-lb-lakewood.org or by phone at (562) 549-3086

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How can people with hearing loss help other PWHL?

Gael Hannan, HearingHealthMatters.org
January 4, 2023

This the week we vow to exercise more, eat better, be nicer, and reduce, reuse and recycle – and this week, we *mean it*.

Ask us next week how it's working out so far.

But as a person with hearing loss, I've realized that there is more that we can do, not just for ourselves but for other people impacted by hearing loss. Our friends, our family members, our work colleagues, and everyone else we interact with in even the smallest way.

Some ideas to consider to have a Happy New Hearing Year:

1. If you have an assortment of old hearing aids lying around, trust me. There are no collectors of old, brown, yukky-gukky hearing aids and molds who need them for their historical collections. However, there are agencies who will make good use of the technology itself – refurbishing them for those who cannot afford it. The Lions Club is one (in some areas), and ask your hearing care provider if they know where you can donate them.
2. Support your local or national consumer hearing associations. Organizations like the Hearing Loss Association of America and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association and others around the world can't operate on fumes. They need money. So instead of grumbling "why aren't they doing more", let's give them the support they need to do what we want them to.
3. Don't hide your hearing loss. Being open about it may help others deal with their own hearing loss,

even if they don't tell you. If you see someone glancing at your hearing device(s), say, "Aren't they gorgeous!" If the conversation stream continues, let them know how technology and a good attitude have helped you cope and thrive with your hearing loss.

4. Share books and other sources of information with people you know who might need a leg up. Many hearing loss writers like Katherine Bouton, Shari Eberts, me and many others have put time and expertise into creating useful information and practical knowledge for those who are not getting it from any other source. (An interesting understatement: it's not making us rich.) Google 'hearing loss books' and see what comes up. Books for children with hearing loss, memoirs, how-to books. Go crazy—start reading and sharing!
5. Attend face to face meetings and virtual meetings of people with hearing loss. Who knows? Something you say or do could resonate with someone and make a difference in their life.
6. Tell your hearing care providers about the positive experiences that you've had -they often share these stories (anonymously, of course) with their other clients. It's a win-win-win.
7. Be kind to yourself. When you discard the misplaced stigma of shame, this fosters comfort in you and others!

So, Happy New HEARING Year! Make it one of rich communication with the people you know and love.

<https://hearinghealthmatters.org/better-hearing-consumer/2023/how-can-people-with-hearing-loss-help-other-pwhl/>



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