

Hearing Aids Improve the Quality of Life

Adapting to hearing aids can be a challenge. But most often persistence in overcoming initial difficulties results in a significant improvement in quality of life.

A Finnish study investigated the emotional problems associated with hearing loss and how to alleviate them. The report was prepared in collaboration with Finland's Oulu University in 2006 and was based on previous surveys and qualitative and quantitative investigations among people 40 to 84 years.

The study found that 56% of hearing impaired people suffer adverse effects in their daily life because of their hearing loss. Many isolate themselves and feel that their quality of life is diminished. 58% feel embarrassed and 64% feel handicapped. Untreated hearing impaired people may have negative problems that affect quality of life.

In comparison to people who use hearing aids, those who do not were more likely to report the following:

- sadness and depression
- worry and anxiety
- paranoia
- less social activity
- emotional turmoil and insecurity

For those whose hearing loss was treated the reported benefits included:

- better relationships with their families
- better feelings about themselves/higher self-esteem
- improved mental health
- greater independence and security

Using hearing aids on a daily basis, more than 30% experience improvements in six months. Most hearing aid users reported significant improvements in their quality of life since they started using hearing aids and more than half report improvements in their domestic relationships and in their self-esteem.

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