The implications of leisure noise for young people with hearing impairment

- Leisure activities of teenagers with hearing impairment (HI) and “normal” hearing (NH) were similar.
- Few teenagers reported high levels of noise exposure.
- One in ten young adults with HI reported high-level noise exposure, compared with one in four NH participants.
- Few participants (with HI or NH) had used hearing protectors, such as earplugs.
- Many participants said they wore hearing aids (switched on) in very noisy places.
- Many participants (HI and NH) dislike, and sometimes avoid, loud leisure situations.

Hearing changes:

- Almost half a selected group of participants* had little or no change in hearing levels over many years.
- When hearing deterioration occurred, changes tended to be gradual.
- Overall, no association between hearing deterioration and noise exposure was found for the group in this study – perhaps to be expected as few participants reported high levels of noise exposure.

Conclusions:

- The entertainment industry, health professionals, governments, communities and individuals should work together to reduce harmful noise in our society.
- People with HI should have regular hearing tests throughout their lifetime.
- Hearing protectors should be used in loud places to reduce the risk of future hearing deterioration. Hearing aids should be switched off where possible.
- We need to learn more about how hearing aids amplify sounds in loud environments.

* HI participant group, with no known high-risk factors for deteriorating hearing (e.g., middle ear conditions or inner ear structure problems).

You can now use an online noise risk calculator to find out if they are at risk of developing hearing loss because of your listening habits. [www.knowyournoise.nal.gov.au](http://www.knowyournoise.nal.gov.au)


Carter, L. (2016). Enabling safe leisure activity for young hearing aids wearers. Report prepared for the Office of Hearing Services, Department of Health and Ageing by the National Acoustic Laboratories (project funded through the National Health and Medical Research Council). Available at: http://www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/about/whoarewe/research/completed-reasearch-projects/ut/p/a0/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOK9A03NDD0NjLwtwvzdDBwd_UJ9vNzXjAz8DiQLsh0VAVNeADw/


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