

# Hearing Loss and the Brain: Evidence

- Research found an association between age-related hearing loss and cognitive function, impairment, and dementia.
- Lin & Colleagues found “Hazard Risks” of some forms of dementia including:
  - 1.89 Hazard Risk with a mild degree of hearing loss
  - 3.0 Hazard Risk with a moderate degree of hearing loss
  - 4.94 Hazard Risk with a severe degree of hearing loss
  - “Among all known modifiable risk factors for dementia, hearing loss in mid-to-late life was the single risk factor accounting for the greatest proportion of dementia risk... The importance of hearing loss in the context of public health is that the broader functional consequences that have been associated with hearing loss may, in fact, be reduced with hearing loss treatment.”
- Sharma & Colleagues found evidence for cross-modal cortical re-organization resulting from hearing loss. That is, there is evidence showing changes in the brain itself due to even mild hearing loss.
- Mild age-related hearing loss requires the individual to use more listening effort and with that comes associated fatigue/tiredness. With Mild/Moderate ARHL, one has to mentally work harder than those with normal hearing and therefore remembers less of what was said.

## *What do we do about it?*

- Desjardins & Colleagues reported significant improvements in performance on cognitive test measures with hearing aid use.
- Qian & Colleagues showed hearing aid use enabled higher scores on a test involving working memory.

If you are concerned about your hearing, understanding, and cognitive decline, contact us for a full diagnostic evaluation and a thorough explanation of your results!



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