

## Editorial

# Hearing Loss: A Problem amenable for Treatment & Prevention

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Chettinad Health City Medical Journal 2021; 10(3): 121 - 122

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.36503/chcmj10\(3\)-01](https://doi.org/10.36503/chcmj10(3)-01)

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Hearing loss affects 466 million individuals worldwide, the majority of whom live in low- and middle-income nations. By 2050, more than 700 million people will have hearing loss. Hearing loss in youngsters is preventable and treated in about 60% of cases. Exposure to loud noise puts over a billion young people at risk of hearing loss. Hearing loss that is disabling is defined as a loss of above 35 db in the ear with good hearing. Early detection and good medical, educational, and social care can help many people with hearing loss.<sup>1</sup> When hearing loss goes untreated or when a person's communication needs aren't met, it can have a detrimental impact on many facets of their lives.<sup>2</sup>

a) Maternal rubella, syphilis, or other infections, b) birth hypoxia, c) very low birth weight, d) usage of certain drug classes (such as aminoglycosides), and e) increased bilirubin levels in neonates are all congenital causes of hearing loss. a) Chronic ear infections, b) diseases such as measles and mumps, c) use of ototoxic medications, d) presbycusis, e) noise pollution, and f) impacted wax or foreign bodies are some of the acquired reasons. a) Conductive type, b) sensorineural type, and c) mixed type are the three main forms of hearing loss. People with hearing loss, ranging from slight to severe, are referred to as "hard of hearing."<sup>3</sup>

Children with hearing difficulties are frequently excluded from school in most underdeveloped nations. Adults who are deaf to some degrees are unemployed in most countries. Even among those who are employed, the majority will be employed in lower-paying positions than other workers. Untreated hearing loss is predicted to cost the global economy \$980 billion every year. This covers health-care costs (excluding hearing aids), educational support costs, productivity losses, and social

costs. Low- and middle-income countries are responsible for 57 percent of these costs.

The key to efficient management of hearing loss and ear disorders is early detection.

There is a need for basic screening for hearing, as well as any other problems in the ear in those vulnerable people. New-borns and kids less than 5 years, school going children, those exposed to noise or toxins at work, people using ototoxic drugs, and elderly adults are all affected. Once hearing loss has been discovered, it is critical that it be handled as soon as feasible and in an appropriate manner in order to minimise any negative consequences. The use of hearing technology inclusive of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and middle ear implants; using language of signs and different sorts of sensory substitution, inclusive of speech reading, print on palm, and signed conversation; and rehabilitative remedy to enhance perceptive competencies and increase conversation and linguistic competencies are a number of the alternatives to be had to human beings with different degrees of loss of hearing.<sup>4</sup>

Hearing loss prevention is critical throughout one's life, from prenatal and perinatal stages through later years. Almost 6 in 10 cases of hard of hearing in children is by avertible causes, that can be avoided by implementing public health initiatives. Proper vaccination, better reproductive health practises, genetic counselling, identification of ear conditions early and treating them, proper planning in the industries for avoidance of exposure to noise and chemicals which can damage hearing, safe listening strategies for reducing exposure to loud sounds in recreational settings, and appropriate use of ototoxic medications are all said to be proven ways by which we can reduce the problem of loss of hearing to a great extent.<sup>5</sup>

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**How to cite this article:** Raja D. Hearing Loss: A Problem amenable for Treatment & Prevention. *Chettinad Health City Medical Journal* 2021; 10(3): 121-22.