

At University of Washington Speech & Hearing Clinic we love our patients!

To stay in touch, we've improved the look of our newsletter to provide you with the latest hearing healthcare news, clinic updates, and to extend special offers.

Thank you for being our patient – we'll see you soon!

Welcome Fall

STUDENT CORNER



International Outreach

Annie Duchen and Casey Heidohrn, third year AuD students

This August, a group of audiology students and supervisors from the University of Washington traveled to Guatemala to provide hearing healthcare services to children living in rural areas that would not otherwise have access to these services. During this ten-day trip, the team administered hearing tests, fit hearing aids, cleaned ears and identified children in need of ear, nose and throat surgery for a team of surgeons traveling to Guatemala in November. Additionally, the team provided training to local Guatemalan audiology technicians so they can provide the same type of care available to children in the United States. These training sessions are intended to build a sustainable model of audiology healthcare in rural Guatemala.

The philanthropic organization Healing the Children has supported the involvement of UW Audiology students in this project for over four years. On this year's trip, the UW team assessed over 500 patients, ranging in age from 12 months to 87 years. Extensiveness of care depended on each individual patient. However, their ultimate goal was to provide hearing aids to children with permanent hearing loss.

"My experiences in Guatemala have been extremely impactful; my involvement with this project has changed my perspective on the field of audiology and motivated my continued involvement in hearing healthcare for children around the world," says Casey. "This is the second trip for me and am thrilled to have the opportunity to reconnect with our wonderful Guatemalan colleagues to improve their audiology skills and to provide their communities with hearing care."

"This experience provided me the chance to utilize my Spanish language and audiological foundations while also challenging me to be resourceful in difficult and unexpected patient encounters, especially when discussing follow-up care for patients with little access to audiological resources," Annie reflects. "The interaction I had with these complex and low resource patients was profound and led me to be passionate about this cause. I enjoyed providing an impact to a group of Guatemalan children that were in great need of ear-related medical care."

The UW team is very excited about their outreach efforts to date and the future of audiology in Guatemala! To learn more about our trip and donate to our cause, visit our website at: www.youcaring.com/healing-the-children-guatemala-551021



UW Speech & Hearing Clinic

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EXPLAINING VARIABILITY IN HEARING AID OUTCOMES

By: Christi Miller, PhD, CCC-A

Although research often focuses on the average person, an important aspect to remember is that wide variability among people and the outcomes we measure with hearing aids exists. One person may find the “premium” hearing aid significantly better than the “basic” hearing aid, while another person may not notice a difference at all. Making sounds audible (i.e., making sure the aid is programmed correctly) is currently the main predictor of a successful outcome, but even if two people with identical hearing losses are fit with the same hearing aid settings, outcomes can be drastically different. Why is this?

Essentially, we don’t know. It could be that individual people’s brains are affected differently by years of sound deprivation, or someone’s cognitive system is not filling in the gaps like it used to. It’s also possible that a person’s auditory system interacts with the way a hearing aid is processing sound. Therefore, if we knew more about an individual’s auditory and cognitive system, we could better prescribe hearing aid settings, leading to better outcomes. To do this, we need to discover what about a given person leads to a successful or unsuccessful hearing aid fitting. Researchers at the University of Washington are continuing to study this. If you care about improving outcomes for people with hearing aids, please consider volunteering your time (www.uwamplab.com or (206) 543-5659).

PAY IT FORWARD!

The UW Speech and Hearing Department has created a new program to help low-income adults obtain proper hearing healthcare. The UW Hearing Aid Assistance Program (UW HAAP) is seeking donations of used hearing aids. HAAP gladly accept all styles of used hearing aids, regardless of the condition. Your donation will change the quality of life for an individual and their family who are unable to afford amplification on their own. **This is a tax-deductible donation.**



OCTOBER IS AUDIOLOGY AWARENESS MONTH

By: Martha Harney, MS, CCC-A

October is Audiology Awareness Month, with a focus on noise-induced hearing loss.

We do live in a noisy world! Particularly here in Seattle, where the Fall season brings one of our loudest pastimes – the Seattle Seahawks (and Husky football)! But whether we are attending sport venues, music events or working on house projects, how do we know if the sounds around us are too loud?

Approximately 48 million Americans have hearing loss. One in three developed their hearing loss as a result of exposure to noise. When loud sounds enter the ear, the impact of this noise can cause irreparable damage to the delicate hair cells of the cochlea, which in turn can cause permanent hearing loss. However, to quote Benjamin Franklin, “An ounce of protection is worth a pound of cure.” Understanding how sounds in our environment affect our hearing can help us ensure we protect our ears during those times.

How loud is too loud? The effect of loud noise on our hearing is a function of volume and time. The louder the sounds, the less time a person should remain in that environment. Additionally, indoor venues may be louder than outdoor venues since the presence of ceilings and walls can cause reverberation and add to the overall volume.



A good rule of thumb to determine if the noise is too loud and potentially dangerous:

- You have to **SHOUT** over the background noise to be heard.
- The noise is **PAINFUL** to your ear.
- The noise causes your ears to **RING**.
- You have decreased or “**MUFFLED**” hearing for several hours after exposure.

The good news is that prevention is easy through readily available hearing protection and does not detract from the experience we are enjoying. Over-the-counter hearing protection in the form of foam or silicone earplugs can be found at most drug stores. They are inexpensive and provide effective protection when placed in the ear correctly.

There are also custom earplugs that can be made for more specific needs. For example, musicians or music aficionados may appreciate Musician’s Earplugs. This type of hearing protection is designed to reduce sound in a way that replicates the natural resonance of the ear canal, thereby providing a better listening experience compared to foam earplugs. Musician’s earplugs are just one example of custom earplugs. Consult an audiologist to discuss your specific listening environments and hearing protection needs.



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If you or loved ones participate in ***loud activities***,
protect yourself from risks of hearing loss!

Noise – induced hearing loss can be prevented with effective hearing protection! Preserving hearing is a key to allowing us to enjoy music and maintain effective communication for a lifetime.



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Schedule an appointment
and receive

10% Off

when you purchase your
custom ear protection!

(206) 900-9726

*Offer expires 11/30/2016