

Hearing Your Best

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INFORMATION FROM

Associated Audiologists, Inc. "Hearing Your Best for Life"

Local Resource, National Leader

Located in Fairway, Kan., the University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Center (KU ADC) is a National Institute of Aging designated and funded Alzheimer's Disease Center. Researchers at centers with this elite designation are working to translate research advances into improved diagnoses, care, and educational resources for Alzheimer's disease (AD) patients, while trying to find a way to cure and possibly prevent Alzheimer's disease.

The KU ADC scientists have received international attention for research on how various lifestyle factors, including fitness and physical activity, affect normal aging and Alzheimer's disease. The Research Division brings the latest clinical trials to Kansas City and tests the newest medicines.

The KU ADC also offers a Lifestyle Enrichment for Alzheimer's Prevention (LEAP!) program, which Associated Audiologists is proud to help sponsor. This innovative program translates the latest Alzheimer's disease prevention research into actionable recommendations for everyday life. Through LEAP!, they provide education and resources to rural Kansas, including the communities of Washington and Seneca, as well as the greater Kansas City area.

**To learn more, visit
kualzheimer.org
or call 913-588-0555.**

Hearing Loss May be Related to Cognitive Decline

An estimated 5.2 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and by 2025, that number is estimated to increase to 7.1 million people.

Previous studies have shown that older adults with untreated hearing loss have a higher incidence of fall- and accident-related death, social isolation, and dementia than those without hearing loss.

Untreated hearing loss also can interfere with cognitive abilities because so much effort is put toward processing and understanding speech. As people age, basic cognitive skills, including working memory and processing, can decline. This may negatively affect the ability to process speech in a noisy environment, or the ability to process information quickly.

Research also has demonstrated that hearing aid use can reduce the social, functional and emotional consequences of hearing loss.

Hearing Aids Improve Cognitive Performance

A study from researchers at Columbia University Medical Center found that older adults who used a hearing aid performed significantly better on cognitive tests than those who did not use a hearing aid, despite having poorer hearing. The study was published online in the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

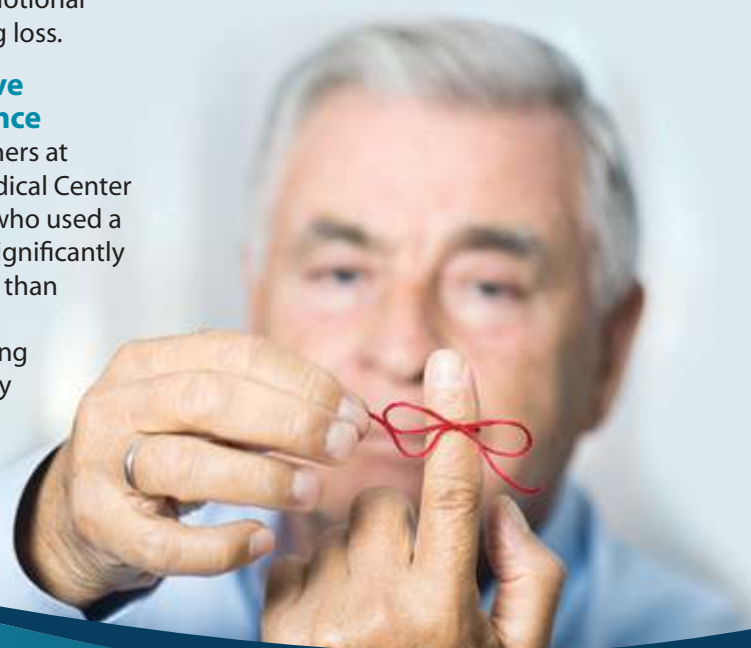
The authors concluded the study suggests that using a hearing aid may offer a simple, yet important way to prevent or slow the development of dementia and improve cognitive function in older adults.

Improved Brain Function for Adults in Their 50s and 60s

Hearing loss also affects 10 million Americans ages 45 to 64, but only about 20 percent of people in this age category who need hearing aids wear them.

This study from the speech-language pathology program at the University of Texas, El Paso looked at

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Hear Here...

*By Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President,
Associated Audiologists, Inc.*

An article I recently read spoke about a new concern: Americans who are increasingly subscribing to "Google University," becoming self-defined experts in various fields through their own online information searches. This concept is addressed by author, Tom Nichols.

In fact, it's becoming common for health care providers to see patients who have already "self-diagnosed" their condition and come to them requesting a specific medication advertised on television or online. With smartphones, tablets, and laptop computers, many consumers feel empowered to pursue endless online information and promotions, all just a click or two away.

We have patients who come to us reporting they've done their "own research" and have decided upon a specific make and model of hearing device. Many times they haven't considered variables such as type of hearing loss, device performance, durability, and industry trends. They may not realize that this might not be the best hearing aid for them based on all we know. That's where we come in.

As a group practice in business for more than 30 years, we have the combined knowledge, history, experience, and expertise of 14 doctoral-level audiologists.

Powerful, real-world data and experience drives our decisions and recommendations. We consider issues like reliability, manufacturer stability and support, performance, software, best practices, and ultimately patient satisfaction.

Still, it's fascinating to me that many consumers feel confident making their own decisions without thinking through the variables behind product marketing and online information. Without any actual experience fitting hearing aids and following thousands of patients, most are completely unaware of the important decisions behind our expert recommendations.

I told someone just the other day that we both have the same goals—your satisfaction. I suppose it comes down to a high level of trust. We hope that we have earned your trust and respect, and that you feel comfortable consulting with your audiologist in a collaborative way. This allows us to share our expertise, helping you reach your own goals for overcoming hearing loss, tinnitus, sound sensitivity, or dizziness/vertigo.

There are some things that "Dr. Google" and online searches still can't do, one of which is actually treating these challenging conditions. The internet is a good place to start when you're looking for basic information, but at the end of the day, it's just a tool to help you learn more about your condition and possible options. Our job is to use our expertise and experience to recommend the best solution for your circumstances, achieving a win-win for everyone.

Dr. Petrosky Joins Practice



The opportunity to join the Associated Audiologists team is a chance for Katie Petrosky, Au.D., to return to her Kansas City area roots.

Born and raised in Leawood and Overland Park, Kan., Dr. Petrosky graduated from Blue Valley North High School, then headed to St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., where she earned her undergraduate degree in English, psychology and religion.

It wasn't until she took a course in the psychology of hearing loss that she became interested in audiology as a profession. "I found the subject fascinating," Dr. Petrosky said. "I knew I wanted to pursue a career where I could help others, and audiology was a great fit for me."

Following graduation from St. Olaf, Dr. Petrosky was accepted into the doctor of audiology program at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine. There, she was exposed to a wide range of clinical experiences including hearing aid evaluation, programming and verification for adults.

For her capstone project, she served as the principal investigator for the creation of an educational hearing device pamphlet to be used by employees in assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

She spent her final year with the program as an extern with Associated Audiologists, working with patients who have hearing loss, tinnitus and dizziness and balance disorders. She received her doctorate in May, and joined the practice in July.

She will be working with patients mostly in our Kansas City Clinic. "I like developing relationships with our patients and enjoy helping people," Dr. Petrosky said. "Associated Audiologists exemplifies that."

Dr. Petrosky and her husband, Phil, currently reside in Overland Park. She enjoys traveling, spending time with family and volunteering with her church. Phil also is attending medical school at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences.

**For more information about Dr. Petrosky,
visit www.hearingyourbest.com.**

Practice Offers New FDA-Approved Tinnitus Treatments

Tinnitus is one of the most common, yet frustrating audiological conditions many patients face. In fact, according to the American Tinnitus Association, as many as 2 to 3 million people cannot function “normally” on a day-to-day basis due to their tinnitus.

At Associated Audiologists, we have a comprehensive Tinnitus/Sound Sensitivity Program to assist in diagnosing and managing care for individuals who have tinnitus. The program's services are provided by **Susan Smittkamp, Au.D., Ph.D., FAAA**, tinnitus specialist. Dr. Smittkamp uses the most sophisticated technology available in the greater Kansas City area to diagnose and manage these patients' disorders.



Dr. Smittkamp

For some patients with tinnitus, hearing aids can provide a good solution, but for the most complex cases, more sophisticated management may be necessary. Associated Audiologists is the exclusive

provider of two of the newest FDA-approved tools for tinnitus management.

Desyncra™ for Tinnitus

Desyncra is a targeted, neuroscience-based therapy designed to desynchronize pathological neuronal activity in tinnitus neuronal networks. This noninvasive therapy is tailored to the patient's unique tinnitus profile. The therapeutic stimulus is delivered over a 36-week treatment period, using proprietary earphones and software on an Apple platform. The stimulus is non-disruptive, so it is convenient to use while engaging in normal activities of daily living. Typically, patients notice reduction in tinnitus loudness and annoyance within a few weeks of starting therapy with benefits lasting beyond the therapy period.



The Levo System from Otoharmonics

The Levo system is a personalized, neuroscience-based sound therapy that is designed for use during sleep, when the brain is especially responsive to habituation. The patient's unique tinnitus sound print is identified and delivered over the treatment period, using custom-fit ear buds and proprietary software on an Apple platform. Used nightly for 90 days and as needed thereafter, patients gradually habituate to their tinnitus.

Associated Audiologists also offers the Neuromonics Tinnitus Treatment, which uses modified music to reduce tinnitus awareness and disturbance, and facilitate habituation.

Dr. Smittkamp also treats patients with hyperacusis and misophonia. She sees patients at our Shawnee Mission Clinic Mondays through Fridays. To schedule an appointment with her, call 913-403-0018.

Hearing Loss/Cognitive Decline *continued from page 1*

a group of individuals in their 50s and 60s with hearing loss in both ears who had previously never used hearing aids.

After two weeks of hearing aid use, tests revealed an increase in percent scores for recalling words in working memory and selective attention tests, and the processing speed at which participants selected the correct response was faster.

By the end of the study, participants exhibited significant improvement in their overall cognitive function.

These studies underscore the connection between hearing loss and other significant health issues including dementia, brain shrinkage, depression, falling, hospitalization, mortality and overall physical and mental health.

“As our population ages and hearing loss becomes more prevalent, research continues to support

improved cognitive function for individuals who wear hearing aids,” says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists. “As audiologists, our role is to partner with you and your primary care provider to improve your hearing and quality of life through appropriate assessment and hearing aid technology, audiological rehabilitation, and regular follow-up, when applicable.”



Medications Can Cause Dizziness

There's no question as many people age, they take more and more medications, supplements and over-the-counter drugs.

In fact, a recent survey in the United States of a representative sample of 2,206 adults (aged 62-85 years), revealed at least one prescription was used by 87 percent of those surveyed. Five or more prescription medications were used by 36 percent, and 38 percent used over-the-counter medicines.

While many of these medications are necessary to manage chronic illnesses or reduce the risk of disease, common medications, including those that control high blood pressure or alter the neurochemistry of the brain, can intensify or cause dizziness. Experts estimate approximately 30 percent of patients experience these side effects.

Risks and Diagnostic Testing

Whether a drug or supplement is the cause or a contributor to a problem with dizziness or balance, the risks can be significant. Having a problem with balance doubles an individual's fall risk. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of accidental injury and death in people over 65.

If you take any of the medications listed and have experienced dizziness or lightheadedness, talk with your primary care provider. A look at your medication may help with the issue. If your provider thinks an evaluation for your balance is needed, Associated Audiologists offers a comprehensive Vestibular Program for the diagnosis and management of individuals experiencing dizziness and lightheadedness. The program's services are provided by

Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA, vestibular specialist.



Dr. Dorner

For more information or to schedule an appointment with the Associated Audiologists Vestibular Program, call 816-442-7831.

Common Medications that May Cause Problems

While many drugs can cause problems with dizziness or balance, the medications most frequently responsible may include:

- > **Antidepressants:** Fluoxetine (Prozac) and trazodone (Desyrel)
- > **Anti-convulsants:** Divalproex (Depakote), gabapentin (Neurontin) and pregabalin (Lyrica)
- > **Blood pressure drugs:** All drugs used to treat the condition, including ACE inhibitors such as Lisinopril (Zestril), beta-blockers such as propranolol (Inderal), diuretics such as furosemide (Lasix) and hydrochlorothiazide and calcium-channel blockers such as nifedipine (Procardia)
- > **Muscle relaxants:** Cyclobenzaprine (Amnix) and metaxalone (Skelaxin)
- > **Pain relievers:** Hydrocodone and over-the-counter ibuprofen and naproxen
- > **Sleeping pills:** Diphenhydramine (Benadryl, Unisom, Sominex), temazepam (Restoril), eszopiclone (Lunesta) and zolpidem (Ambien)
- > **Antihistamines**
- > **Chemotherapeutic agents**
- > **Nitroglycerin**



**ASSOCIATED
AUDIOLOGISTS**

We are on a mission:

To improve lives through comprehensive audiology care.

Here's Why You May be Happier with Your Hearing Aids

Have you ever talked with a friend or relative who has purchased hearing aids online, and isn't as satisfied with their investment?

In a recent study led by Indiana University with funding support from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), 150 adults ages 55-79 with mild to moderate hearing loss, received a professional hearing evaluation from an audiologist before being fit with the same high-end digital mini hearing aids in both ears.

Eighty-one percent of people whose hearing aids were fit by an audiologist wanted to buy the devices after a six-week trial period, compared with 55 percent who picked out and adjusted their own.

Audiologists, who usually have a doctoral degree and more than 1,000 hours of clinical training, can assess your hearing; check for correctable issues such as infections and impacted earwax; fit an appropriate hearing aid; and teach you how to use it.

As this research underscores, satisfaction with hearing aids is higher when working with an audiologist who subscribes to best practices or holds affiliations with organizations such as the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, American Academy of Audiology, or the Academy of Doctors of Audiology.

"Speaking from experience, patients who successfully wear hearing aids see their audiologist as a partner in their hearing health, working together to find hearing aids best suited to their lifestyle, needs and budget," said Tim Steele,

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am satisfied with the quality of sounds I hear with my hearing aid.					
2. My hearing aid is comfortable to wear.					
3. The information I received about the care and operation of my hearing aid was adequate.					
4. The information I received about hearing aids was appropriate.					

Ph.D., FAAA. "Most patients benefit from adjustments and a custom hearing solution, which are only available by working with a trained professional."

At Associated Audiologists, we routinely survey you to determine your level of satisfaction with your hearing aids and the service we provide. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best, you rate us:

- > Level of satisfaction with your hearing aids from Associated Audiologists – 4.56.
- > Level of satisfaction with your audiologist at Associated Audiologists – 4.99.
- > Likelihood to recommend Associated Audiologists to a friend or family – 4.96.

Whenever you receive a survey from us, please take the time to tell us how we're doing. Your feedback helps us improve our service and the care we provide you.



Join the conversation!



Find us on facebook.

www.facebook.com/hearingyourbest

Hearing Your Best

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

By Linda Erickson, Au.D.,
FAAA, Senior Audiologist



Music to Your Ears! Bluetooth Hearables Now Available

Bragi, a smart headphone manufacturer based in Germany, has partnered with Starkey Hearing Technologies to introduce devices for a whole new generation of people interested in hearing their best.



These are custom-fit, wireless Bluetooth ear-level worn devices that will store up to 1,000 songs or podcasts on 4GB of storage, allowing the wearer to listen to their favorite selections while walking, running, biking or working around the house without needing to have their phone or iPod nearby.

They are waterproof and can even be worn while swimming in up to three feet of fresh water. These devices contain sensors that monitor your activities, becoming a fitness tracker that keeps track of your heart rate, length of workouts, etc., and are controlled by simple touches to the faceplates of the devices or by head gestures, if desired.

Wearers can use these custom devices to make or receive calls, even in noisy environments. They are compatible with iTranslate and can provide real-time translation for about 40 different languages. And the battery life will last through five hours of direct streaming and 30 hours on standby.

The Bragi Dash Pro custom ear pieces cost \$499 per set. They require impressions of your ears, taken by an audiologist in our offices, to achieve the most comfortable and effective fit. These are not hearing aids; they are designed simply to bring the sound from your audio source through the ear-worn receivers as clearly as possible while keeping out unwanted background sounds.

**Call any of our offices to talk to an audiologist
and determine if these custom Bluetooth hearables
could be right for you.**

STAFF NEWS

Dr. Paul Speaks to Kansas Guard

David Paul, Au.D., FAAA, recently presented at the Kansas Army National Guard Medical Detachment's Medical Conference – 2017. The audience for the presentation was a multidisciplinary group of physicians, dentists, nurses and various other allied health medical providers who are assigned to the Kansas Army National Guard. His presentation provided an update on the Kansas Army National Guard's Hearing Readiness, as well as information on the range of testing available from an audiologist.



Dr. Paul

New Externs on Board

Two new externs will be working with Associated Audiologists in the final year of their educational study for the doctorate of audiology degree. They are:



Stephanie Scott



Ashley Johnson

> **Stephanie Scott**, Missouri State University, Springfield, Mo.

> **Ashley Johnson**, University of the Pacific, San Francisco, Calif.

Stephanie anticipates graduating in May 2018, and Ashley in August 2018. Please be sure to welcome them to the practice!

Marlene Retires

After 11 years with Associated Audiologists, **Marlene** with our Overland Park Clinic, retired June 30. Marlene plans to spend more time with family, friends, volunteering, traveling and gardening.

"I have really enjoyed working with everyone at the practice, especially our wonderful patients!" Marlene says. "I will miss you all."





By Lisa Battani, Au.D., FAAA,
Audiologist and Hearing Aid
Program Director



A Cheer for the Hard-of-Hearing

By Carol Watts,
Associated Audiologists Patient

**Delivered to the Overland Park
Rotary, February 2017**

2 - 4 - 6 - 8,
Know what we'd appreciate?
Folks who get their diction straight
And clearly can enunciate!

7 - 8 - 9 - 10,
We're partially deaf, can ya' say it again?
Cuz' the consonants just start to blend
With the voices and the dishes and
the general din.

The point of your message won't
be distillable
If some of us only hear every other
syllable.
Don't speak to the floor, we're not on
your shoes,
Project to the room or we're singin'
the blues!

And NO, it's not the volume, dear,
So please don't yell into my ear.
Hand raised...I ask you succinctly
If you've EVER spoken less than
distinctly –
Unless, of course, you're in my camp,
In which case you're exempt, and can
join my chant.

Summer weather and humidity can be hard on electronic devices, especially hearing aids worn in damp ear canals. During warmer weather, patients occasionally complain about intermittent function or odd noises, like popping or crackling from their hearing aids. Both of these may be caused by unwanted moisture building up inside your hearing aids. To keep your aids performing optimally this summer, here are a few helpful tips.

- 1 Many hearing aids are equipped with a filter to protect the speaker from wax, oil and moisture. Sometimes the filter will appear clean when it is actually plugged or partially plugged with oil or moisture. If you experience reduced volume, sporadic popping or crackling, or intermittent function, it's likely your wax filter needs to be replaced.
- 2 If you notice discoloration in your battery compartment or your aids seem to function intermittently, you may benefit from a storage container that removes moisture from your hearing aids when they are

not in use (typically overnight). These systems range from simple and inexpensive jars with desiccant canisters inside, to electronic versions with fans and UV lights. The cost ranges from approximately \$20 to \$200, but the investment is well worth it. There is no downside to using a drying system and it may help prolong the life of your hearing aids by removing unwanted moisture while you sleep.

- 3 If you believe your hearing aids have gotten wet from perspiration, humidity, or maybe an accidental shower, remove the devices immediately. Dispose of the batteries and allow the devices to dry before replacing with new batteries. In some cases, you can use a warm hair dryer at a slight distance from the hearing aids to promote moisture removal. If you have a drying system, place the hearing aids in the dryer overnight. If they are non-functional or noisy, contact one of our clinics for inspection and possible repair.

**If you have questions or would like additional information,
please give us a call.**

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Important
information
about hearing
and balance
health from your
audiologist.

Hearing Your Best

Leavenworth Clinic Relocates in Same Building

Good news for our Leavenworth Clinic patients!

Our office recently relocated just down the hall in the Cushing Medical Plaza, but our suite number remains the same, 105.

The new office features additional space, updated décor and technology to provide our patients with the best experience possible.

David Paul, Au.D., FAAA, is the doctoral-level audiologist who cares for our Leavenworth patients full time, assisted by Leesa.

To schedule an appointment in our Leavenworth Clinic, call 913-682-1870.

