



Revealed: Hearing Loss

The #1 Modifiable Risk
Factor of **Dementia**



VIRSONO
Hearing Center

VirsonoHearing.com



INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM J. CONNON SAMUEL

Thank you for taking the time to read this **updated** report detailing the links of **Hearing Loss** and **Dementia**. There are always new reports coming out helping us to better understand the science of Dementia and ways to help us avoid the devastating fate of a Dementia diagnosis. Perhaps the most impressive report I recently read was from a European Dementia commission titled: **Dementia Prevention, Intervention, and Care** published in the Lancet Journal.

Let's start by reviewing some of the facts about Dementia. According to Alzheimer's Disease International, every 3 seconds another individual is diagnosed with Dementia¹. The national median cost to care for a loved one with Dementia is \$65,000 per year according to Seniorliving.org². Research recently published in the Alzheimer's and Dementia journal found that an individual lives for an average of 5 years after being diagnosed with dementia³. **And, Medicare does not cover the cost of memory care when it is associated with assisted living or a memory care specific community².**

Perhaps even more troubling, is that the government spends nearly 10 times more on Cancer research than on Dementia research⁴. And in case you missed the recent headlines, Pfizer, one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, has decided to close its Dementia research center⁵.

But, not all news is bad news. In fact, the Lancet report highlighted that nearly **40% of all Dementia cases are considered preventable⁶**. Phew! The report even laid out the most important modifiable lifestyle factors that can help each of us prevent Dementia.

And (not surprisingly), the #1, single most modifiable factor for preventing Dementia is the treatment of hearing loss⁶. Yes, reducing obesity, diabetes, and/or cardiovascular disease are important. It is also important to increase social activity, enhance our education and supplement our nutrition. These can all play a part in helping us to prevent Dementia; but none, even when combined, are nearly as effective as the treatment of hearing loss. I think Dr. Doraiswamy, a Neuropsychologist from Duke University said it best:

"The benefits of correcting hearing loss on cognition are twice as large as the benefits from any cognitive-enhancing drugs now on the market. It should be the first thing we focus on."

Virsono Hearing Center is the embodiment of innovation and comprehensive hearing healthcare. We understand the social, emotional, and cognitive impact hearing loss may have on you or your loved one. Please call our office to schedule your appointment.

Sincerely,

J. Connon Samuel

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Chief Executive Officer
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J. Connon Samuel
Chief Executive Officer

We are the centers of excellence in the medical treatment of hearing loss, specializing in the patented Earlens technology for optimized patient outcomes. The medical treatment of hearing loss is a transformational experience that requires a deep understanding of individual patient needs. To do this, we have created the Virsono Experience, which is a four-step process that allows us to build a relationship with our patients from day one. Earlens is fully customized for your unique ears and hearing loss. The process is seamless from start to finish. We know helping our patients hear better today can impact the life they live tomorrow.

Hear the Difference

When comparing the sound quality of traditional hearing aids to Earlens, people often say it's like the difference between an AM transistor radio and a high-quality stereo system. It's that dramatic. Schedule an appointment at one of our Virsono Hearing Center locations to hear the difference for yourself. Call today 855-797-1066

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Hearing Loss & Dementia

HEARING LOSS AND COGNITIVE DECLINE

What is the Relationship? And is Dementia Avoidable?

Hearing Loss impacts over 48 Million people in the U.S. and is listed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as the 3rd most common chronic disorder affecting today's seniors¹. Unfortunately, for most of us, age-related hearing loss is inevitable; impacting nearly 50% of seniors between the ages of 60-70, almost 2/3 of people between the age of 70-80 and nearly 80% of individuals over the age of 80². Age-related hearing loss is characterized by the progressive loss of receptor (hair) cells in the ear that consequently reduces the quantity and quality of neural connections from the ear to the brain. This slow-onset disease can have a significant impact on several key brain areas, including the memory, hearing, speech and language portions of cognition. Several key research studies have pointed to the potential links of hearing loss and Dementia that indicate hearing loss can increase the risk of Dementia by 200-500%, including the groundbreaking work from Dr. Frank Lin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins Medical Center (see summary data in Figure 1)³.

Every 3 seconds another patient is diagnosed with Dementia⁴. Rates of Dementia are estimated to triple in the next 30 years⁵. Unlike some other diseases, with Dementia the physical body is estimated to outlive the individual's mental capabilities by 10 or more years. There is no cure for this catastrophic disease, but there are treatments available, including several ways to decrease your risk of developing Dementia.

Hearing loss and incident dementia study, from researchers at Johns Hopkins Medical Center and the National Institute on Aging found that individuals with hearing loss (when compared to participants with normal hearing) are at a significantly higher risk of developing Dementia over time³. The more hearing loss they had, the higher their likelihood of developing the memory-robbing disease. "A lot of people ignore hearing loss because it's such a slow and insidious process as we age," Dr. Frank Lin (of Johns Hopkins Medical Center) says. "Even if people feel as if they are not affected, we're showing that it may well be a more serious problem."

Three risk factors associated with hearing loss and Dementia include Social Isolation, Cerebral Atrophy and Cognitive Overload.

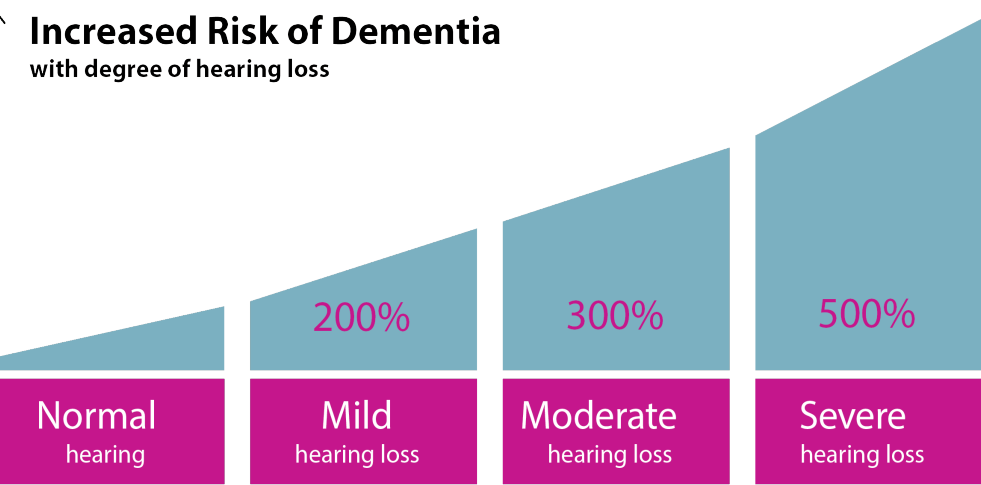


Figure 1: Summary of Data from Hearing loss and incident dementia,

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1. Social Isolation

Social Isolation – the impact of reduced social and physical activity. Withdrawal from social situations is common in individuals with hearing loss. Many studies cite feelings of embarrassment, fear of making mistakes in conversations, and feeling like you are not part of the conversation as the common rationale for individuals with hearing impairment to separate themselves from family, friends and community. This retreat from social activity has even been found in individuals with a mild degree of hearing loss¹. In addition, individuals with hearing loss are less likely to engage in physical activity¹. Both increased social isolation and reduced physical activity are strong risk factors for the development of Dementia¹.

Active Aging: How to Reduce Social Isolation

Active Aging – the process of optimizing opportunities for better health, continuing development of knowledge, and increased security in order to maximize quality of life as you age. The word ‘active’ is used to describe a person’s involvement with social, physical, economic, spiritual and civic affairs. We all share the same goal to maintain autonomy and independence as we age, and thus we must rely on preserving the tenants of interdependence (socialization and reliance on family and loved ones) and intergenerational solidarity (maintaining companionship with age-matched peers) to ensure active aging.

Both Social Isolation and Depression are major risk factors for the development of Dementia, and both increase as we age². Being a lifelong learner and staying active is important to maintain a healthy, active brain and can also reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia^{3,4}. Some studies have shown that social activities, larger social networks and a history of social contact are associated with better cognitive function and reduced risk for cognitive decline.



“ From the first moment I got them, I was hooked on Earlens. There was no way I was going to go try something else. This is the way to go. They’re worth every penny. ”
– Dante

“ After getting my brand new Earlens, I immediately turned the radio on to my favorite music and I just sat there, and tears, I mean literally, tears just came down. ”
– Genie

***“Blindness Separates You From Things. . .
Deafness Separates You From People.”***

Quote by Helen Keller

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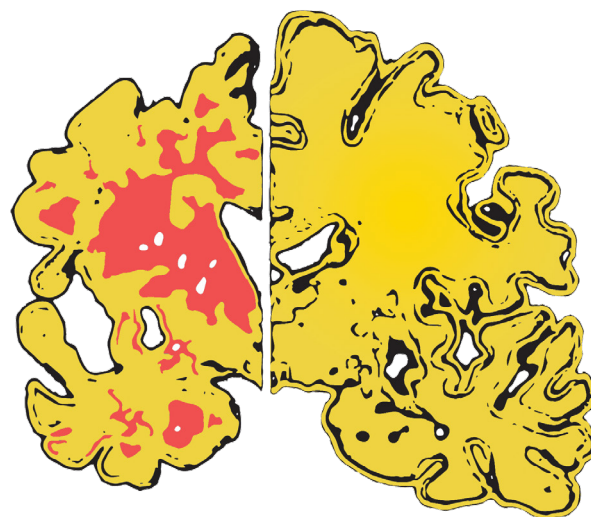
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2. Cerebral Atrophy (aka Brain Shrinkage)

The association of a shrinking brain, resulting from the loss of neurons, with Dementia has been long documented. Even people with MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment) show signs of cerebral atrophy¹. In recent years, scientific studies using advanced brain imaging techniques (including fMRI - Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) have demonstrated that hearing impairment is associated with accelerated brain atrophy in both the overall brain as well as even more advanced reductions in volume associated with the memory, hearing, speech and language portions of the brain².

Individuals with Hearing Loss can experience significant cerebral atrophy². The most significant reduction in cerebral volume occurs in areas involved in:

- Memory
- Hearing
- Speech
- Language



Brain With Hearing Loss

Brain With Normal Hearing

“It (hearing loss) not only increases age-related memory loss, it increases the incidents of Alzheimer’s disease so if you can prevent the onset of Alzheimer’s disease or delay it with good hearing devices that’s a major public health advance.”

Quote by Erik Kandel, Recipient of the Nobel Prize
in Physiology or Medicine

TIPS!

Tips for Active Aging include:

- Share a meal with family and friends 3-5 times per week
- Commit to an aerobics / exercise regimen
- Learn a new hobby each year
- Play an instrument (or learn a new instrument)
- If you love to read.... Keep reading (try to mix up the topics!)
- If you don’t read much – try to read a book every other month
- Participate in classes at your local senior center
- Volunteer at a local hospital, shelter, etc.
- Go back to school. Many local Universities offer free tuition to people over 65!

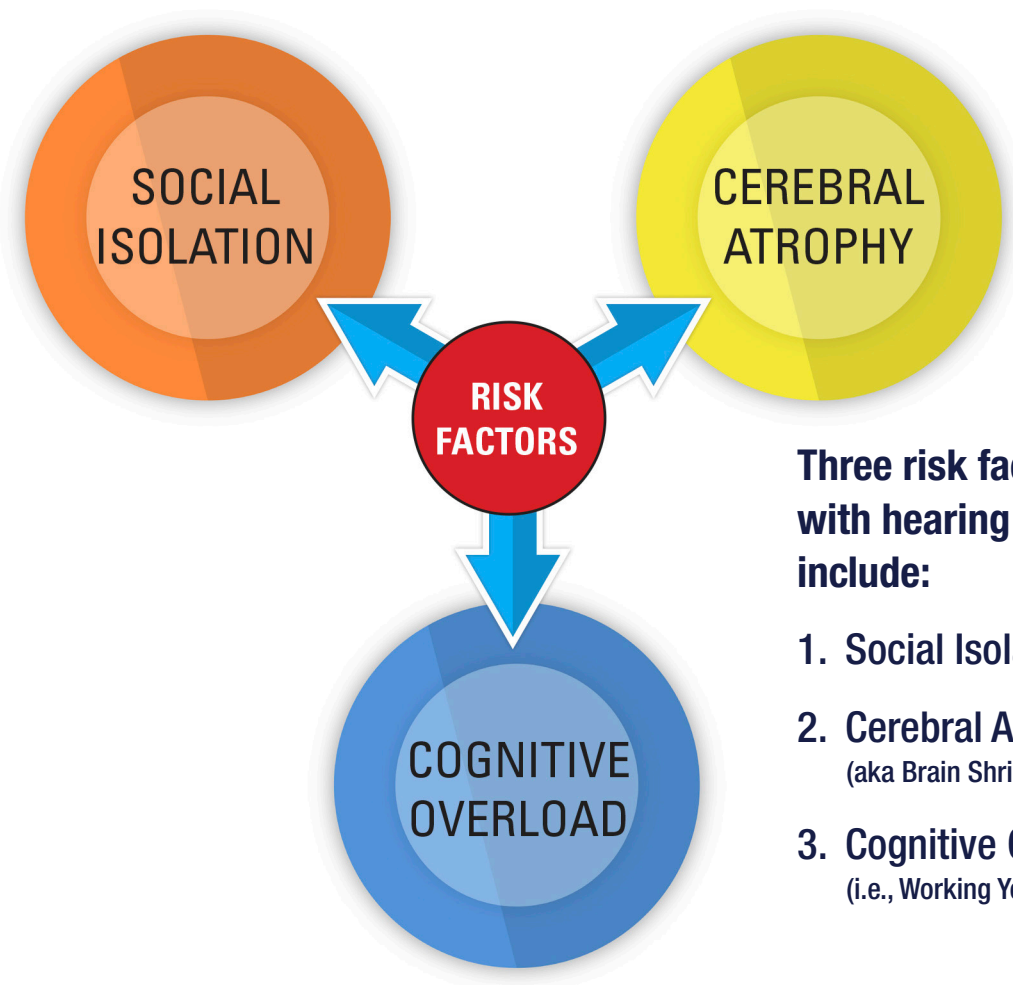
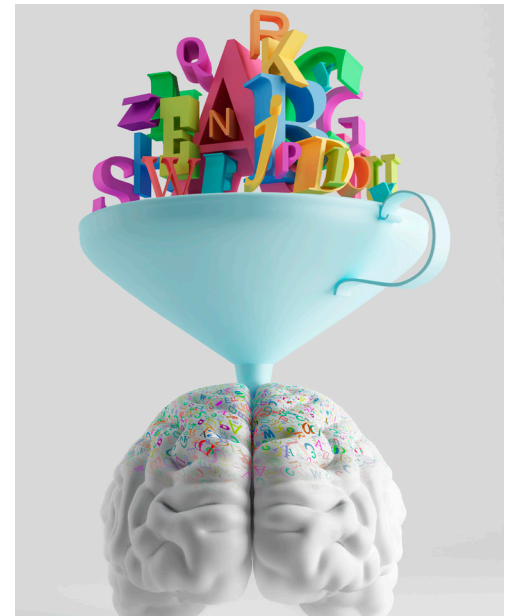
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3. Cognitive Overload (i.e., Working Your Brain Too Hard To Hear)

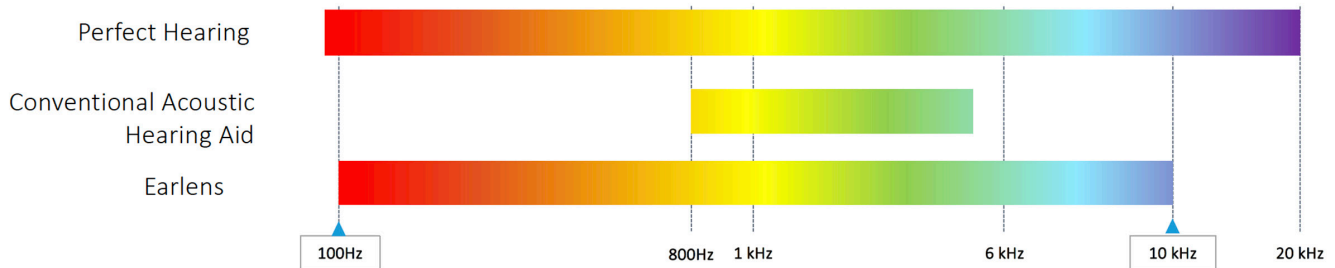
Hearing loss is not normal and neither is the excess strain that it puts on your brain. While hearing loss may be more common as we age, it is critical that hearing loss be treated. With hearing loss, the brain is constantly on 'overload' trying to fill in the missing pieces and follow the conversation. Increased cognitive load is considered a risk factor for developing Dementia. Cognitive load, as measured by pupillometry, is a measurement of how hard your brain is working to follow a conversation. Recent research has found that individuals who treat their hearing loss do not work as hard to listen (i.e. have a reduced cognitive load) and have as much as a 20% increase in memory recall when following a conversation.



Three risk factors associated with hearing loss and Dementia include:

1. Social Isolation
2. Cerebral Atrophy
(aka Brain Shrinkage)
3. Cognitive Overload
(i.e., Working Your Brain Too Hard To Hear)

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The Earlens Difference

- **Earlens** provides 2.5x the audible bandwidth of conventional hearing aids.
- **Earlens** delivers a more natural listening experience¹.
- **Earlens** improves the ability to understand speech in noisy environments by up to 58%².

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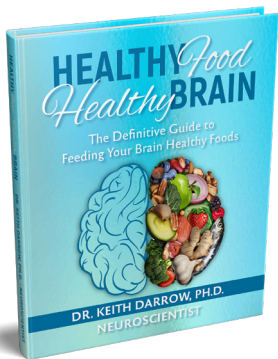
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