

Listening too loud in urban environments

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A new study from Children's Hospital Boston and City University of New York (CUNY) finds that the majority of college students using MP3 players and iPods exceed the recommended sound exposure limits while listening. Findings from this study - the largest of its kind - suggest a majority of these students are at increased risk for noise-induced hearing loss.

The study recently appeared online in the *Journal of Speech Language Hearing Research* and will be featured in the February 2011 issue.

Brian Fligor, Sc.D. CCC-A, director of the Diagnostic Audiology Program at Children's Hospital Boston, and his collaborators at CUNY, Sandra Levey, Ph.D., and Tania Levey, Ph.D., surveyed the listening habits of 189 college students at a New York City university and recorded the levels of their MP3 player and iPod headphones as they entered the campus.

It was found that 58.2 percent of participants exceeded daily sound exposure limits and 51.9 percent exceeded weekly sound exposure limits, suggesting that over half of college students in this [urban environment](#) are at risk for noise-induced hearing loss. "These findings are extremely concerning in light of recent research published in JAMA indicating teenagers have worse hearing today, and identify a hot spot for [loud music](#) listeners in urban youth," says Fligor. "Young adults are not aware of the dangers that come with listening to music too loud. They must take control of their [hearing](#) health and become educated on the topic."

For this study, students were asked about their daily and weekly listening habits, as well as:

- their demographic information;
- whether or not they came off the subway;
- if the volume control of their MP3 player or iPod was the same since they left the subway;
- the type of device and [earphones](#) they used; and
- the duration and frequency of use of their device.

Based on the responses, it was determined how many hours per week participants listened to their devices. Sound levels were then factored in, allowing Fligor and his collaborators to estimate daily and weekly sound exposures. Those results were compared to noise exposure limits, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Provided by Children's Hospital Boston

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