

Audiologists recommend smart phone apps to monitor noise levels

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After studying noise in one French Quarter neighborhood of New Orleans to determine whether or not noise levels exceeded municipal ordinances, Annette Hurley, PhD, Assistant Professor of Audiology at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, and Eric Arriaga, a third-year LSUHSC doctor of audiology student, recommend that people use today's technology to protect their own hearing health. Their case study is published online in the current issue of *Advance for Hearing Practice Management*.

"An important part of an audiologist's practice is aiding patients in their attempts to protect their [hearing](#) from hazardous sound levels," notes Annette Hurley, PhD, LSUHSC Assistant Professor of Audiology.

"Audiologists educate their patients about the dangers of hazardous noise to hearing health and provide hearing protection to patients when appropriate. Often, we are called upon to perform sound level measurements and offer input into the drafting of new noise legislation."

The team, along with a colleague, assessed [noise levels](#) through measurement with sensitive sound meters and the analysis of sample digital recordings they made to settle a dispute between residents and nearby businesses over music. Sound levels ranged from 58 - 93 dBA at various times. They found that, while noise levels were high, the businesses were not in violation of the law. However, the businesses did offer to build a hyperbolic wall to help turn the volume down for their residential neighbors.

While professionals were called in this case, Hurley and Arriaga say the technology available on today's smart phones can put effective measurement of environmental sounds into the public's hands.

"This allows individuals to conveniently and inexpensively obtain estimates of many different types of noise at different locations to not only determine noise compliance issues, but more importantly, empowers individuals to be involved in their hearing health," say the researchers.

According to published studies and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, approximately 5.2 million children, aged 6-19 years, and 26 million adults, aged 20-69 years, have permanent hearing loss as a result of [noise](#) exposure.

Provided by Louisiana State University

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