

Researcher works to increase hearing-aid use among adults with hearing impairments

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Nearly half of individuals who are prescribed hearing aids do not wear the devices, previous research has shown. Now, a University of Missouri researcher has received a fellowship that will help her continue her work to increase hearing-aid use among adults with hearing impairments.

Kari Lane, assistant professor of nursing in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing, recently was named a Claire M. Fagin Fellow by the National Hartford Centers of Gerontological Nursing Excellence. Previously, Lane developed an intervention and self-guided workbook that help adults with [hearing impairments](#) acclimate to the hearing aids. The fellowship award will allow Lane to test the effectiveness of the intervention and see to what extent it increases adults' hearing-aid use.

Lane said several factors contribute to why some individuals do not use their hearing aids or why they only wear the devices occasionally.

"When adults with hearing impairments begin wearing hearing aids, they hear things that they aren't used to hearing, which can be overwhelming, fatiguing and frustrating," Lane said. "In addition, the cost to purchase and maintain the devices is high, and multiple appointments to fit the hearing aids can also cause stress."

Despite obstacles that prevent individuals from using their hearing aids, the devices give those with hearing impairments an enhanced [quality of life](#) that is worth the time and money needed to adjust to the devices, Lane said.

"People think wearing hearing aids makes them old," Lane said. "It's important to reduce the [stigma](#) associated with wearing hearing aids so more people use the devices. The sooner individuals receive treatment for their [hearing problems](#), the better their outcomes are."

If the intervention she developed proves effective, Lane said she hopes to train others how to use the workbook and accompanying intervention. Ideally, she would like to train individuals at audiological clinics who could educate and assist persons with hearing impairments as they begin wearing [hearing aids](#) so they continue using the devices.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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