

Undernourished kids may face hearing problems later on

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(HealthDay)—Poor nutrition in early childhood may make hearing loss

more likely in adulthood, a new study suggests.

Researchers from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health tested the hearing of more than 2,200 young adults in Nepal who had taken part in a nutrition study when they were children.

Those who were undernourished in their preschool years were about twice as likely to have hearing loss 16 years later than those who were better nourished as young children, the study found.

The findings suggest that improved nutrition among children in South Asia could help prevent hearing loss, which affects about 116 million young people in that region, according to the researchers.

Hearing loss is the fourth-leading cause of disability worldwide. About 80 percent of people with hearing loss live in low- and middle-income countries.

"Our findings should help elevate [hearing loss](#) as a still-neglected [public health](#) burden, and one that nutrition interventions in [early childhood](#) might help prevent," lead investigator Keith West Jr. said in a Hopkins news release. He's a professor of international health at the university.

The "findings are not only important for low-resource areas of Nepal, but also for much of South Asia," he said.

The results were published recently in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

More information: The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has more on [hearing loss](#).

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