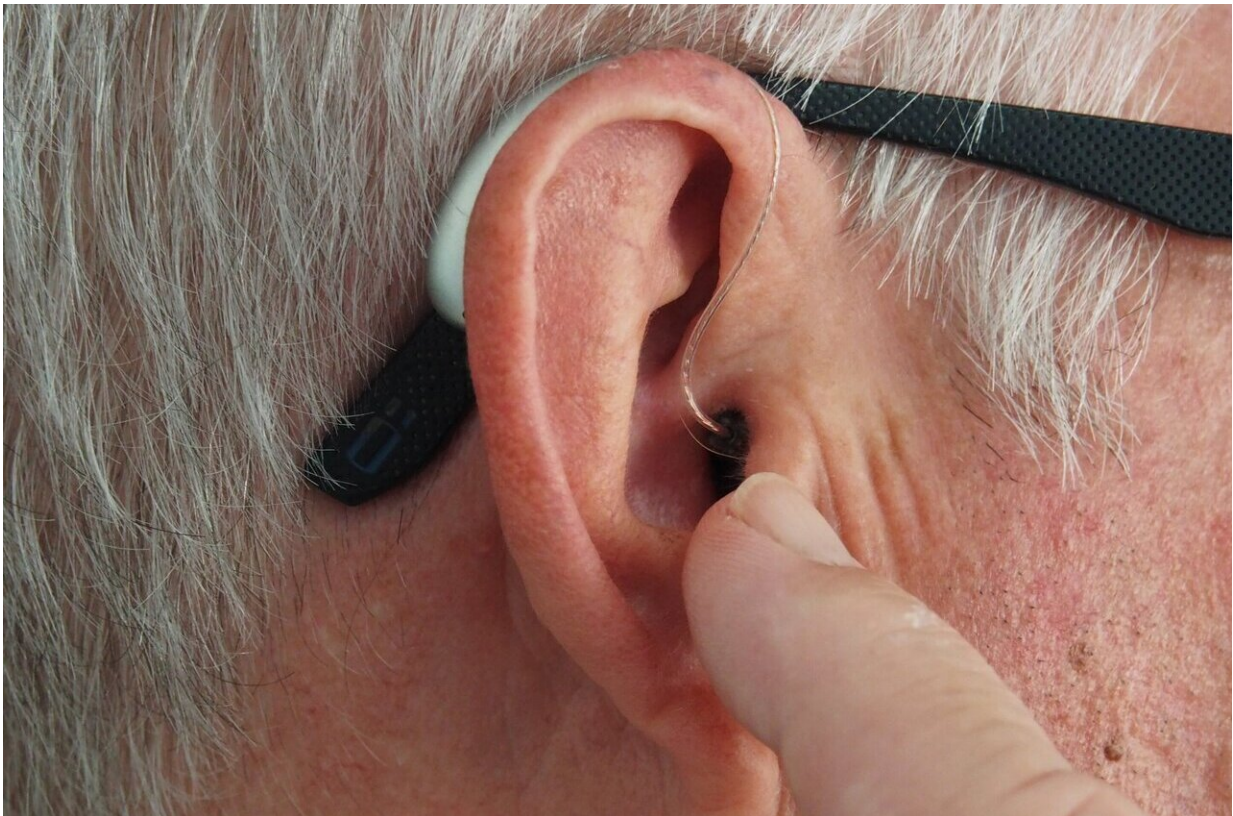


# Screening memory clinic patients for hearing loss helps to manage risk factor for dementia

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A new study led by a Baycrest clinician-scientist titled "Enhancing Clinical Visibility of Hearing Loss in Cognitive Decline" demonstrated that point of care screening for hearing loss in patients of a memory

clinic raised physicians' awareness of its high prevalence among their patients and led to more frequent referrals for hearing help. The study is set to be published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* on March 8, 2022.

Marilyn Reed, Practice Advisor with Baycrest's Department of Audiology and the study's lead author, noted that "[hearing loss](#) is highly prevalent among [older adults](#), yet goes largely unreported, unidentified, and untreated, at great cost to their health and quality of life." However, screening for [hearing](#) loss is not typically recommended by physicians for older adults. As such, the study set out to demonstrate the feasibility and value of hearing screening for older adults at risk for dementia, in order to enhance physicians' awareness of hearing loss and improve access to timely hearing care.

For this study, participant-patients of two academic medical clinics for memory disorders, the Baycrest Sam & Ida Ross Memory Clinic and the Bruyère Memory Program, were offered hearing screening as part of clinical protocol. Screening took place in-office, pre-pandemic, with a tablet-based automated screening tool and online at home, when pandemic precautions prevented in-person consultations and research. Patients with hearing loss were recruited to the study if they consented to a post-appointment telephone interview and chart review. Memory clinic physicians were surveyed about the usefulness of the screening information and referral of patients with hearing loss to audiology.

The study found that hearing loss could be reliably detected in most memory clinic patients tested, with both in-office and online screening tools. Physicians reported that screening enhanced their awareness of hearing loss and helped them decide if a referral to audiology was needed.

In all, the study determined that hearing [screening](#) in [memory](#) clinic

patients is a useful component of clinic protocol that facilitates timely access to hearing management and addresses an important risk factor for dementia.

**More information:** Marilyn Reed et al, Enhancing Clinical Visibility of Hearing Loss in Cognitive Decline, *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* (2022). [DOI: 10.3233/JAD-215377](https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-215377)

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