

Survey highlights lack of awareness with hearing loss

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A Cleveland Clinic study is highlighting the lack of awareness about hearing loss among adults between the ages of 50 and 80 here in the United States.

According to the results, only 10% are able to properly identify what's

considered a "normal" range of hearing.

"Unfortunately, the results of the survey really weren't that surprising. They are important for people to understand, but the fact that they were so underwhelming is pretty much what we expected," said Sarah Sydlowski, AuD, Ph.D., MBA, audiology director for the hearing implant program and associate chief improvement officer for Cleveland Clinic. "We know that patients don't understand hearing loss and how important hearing really is for overall health."

Dr. Sydlowski, who is also the president of the American Academy of Audiology, said the survey found that people are putting off getting their hearing checked over almost every other common health screening.

In addition, 59% said they would very likely take their pet to the vet, but only 27% said they're likely to get their own hearing checked.

Dr. Sydlowski said when hearing loss is left untreated, it can lead to depression, [social isolation](#), and poor quality of life.

So, why are people not taking hearing loss as seriously as other health issues?

She said one factor could be people think of hearing loss as a typical part of aging they must accept, or perhaps the person worries they will "look older" by having to wear [hearing aids](#).

Another is some physicians may not realize how much can be done to improve hearing loss.

"You would never go to a primary care provider and have them say you have [high blood pressure](#), that's common in [older age](#) so just learn to live with it," she said. "They would recommend medication and diet and

exercise. They'd make sure that you're monitored and come back and are keeping an eye on it. And so we really need to do the same with hearing loss as well."

Hearing loss ranks among the most prevalent and untreated disabilities in the world and is the third most common chronic health condition in [older adults](#).

One in eight adults in the U.S. and more than two-thirds of people over the age of 80 suffer from [hearing loss](#).

The research was published in *Otology & Neurotology*.

More information: Matthew L. Carlson et al, Awareness, Perceptions, and Literacy Surrounding Hearing Loss and Hearing Rehabilitation Among the Adult Population in the United States, *Otology & Neurotology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1097/mao.0000000000003473](https://doi.org/10.1097/mao.0000000000003473)

Provided by Cleveland Clinic

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