

Hearing loss tied to fatigue in middle-aged, older adults

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Hearing loss is associated with higher frequency of fatigue in middle-

aged and older adults, according to a research letter published online July 6 in *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*.

Kening Jiang, from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues used data from 3,031 participants (aged 40 years and older) participating in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2015-2016 and 2017-2018) to examine the association between hearing loss and fatigue.

The researchers found that 24 percent of participants had hearing loss, and participants with hearing loss were more likely to report fatigue for more than half the days (relative risk ratio [RRR], 2.16) and nearly every day (RRR, 2.05) versus not having fatigue. With additional adjustment for comorbidities and depressive symptoms, results were similar. Every 10-decibel worse hearing level of audiometric hearing was associated with a higher likelihood of reporting fatigue for nearly every day (RRR, 1.24). While not statistically different, the association tended to be stronger among younger, non-Hispanic White, and female participants.

"Future studies with fatigue assessments capturing its multidimensionality are needed to understand how hearing loss might contribute to physical and mental fatigue differentially and clarify how hearing loss may be associated with downstream outcomes like [physical impairment](#) through fatigue," the authors write.

One author disclosed ties to the pharmaceutical industry and one to the medical technology industry.

More information: Kening Jiang et al, Hearing Loss and Fatigue in Middle-Aged and Older Adults, *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoto.2023.1328](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoto.2023.1328)

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