

Study shows dementia risk for older people with hearing difficulty could be reduced by use of hearing aids

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A large team of medical researchers affiliated with several institutions in Denmark analyzed data from a national health information database and

found evidence that hearing aids could reduce the risk of developing dementia in older people with hearing difficulties. Their study is [published](#) in the journal *JAMA Otolaryngology—Head & Neck Surgery*.

Prior research has suggested that there may be a link between [hearing difficulties](#) in [older people](#) and the development of dementia, suggesting that gradual [hearing loss](#) may be a risk factor for developing one of the many types of dementia. Scientists are still trying to better understand the link, but in the meantime, some in the field have begun to wonder if the use of hearing aids may slow or stop the onset of such diseases.

To learn more about this possibility, the research team turned to the Hearing Examinations in Southern Denmark database, which, as its name implies, is a database that monitors hearing issues in people living in southern parts of Denmark. It contains hearing data for approximately 573,088 people aged 50 years and older and was collected between the years 2003 to 2017.

In analyzing the data, the researchers looked for associations between hearing loss and dementia. They found that older people experiencing hearing loss who did not use a hearing aid were 20% more likely to develop dementia than those without hearing loss. They also found that older people experiencing hearing loss who did use a hearing aid had just a 6% chance of developing dementia, which was close to the average for people who did not experience hearing loss.

The researchers point out that their findings do not prove that the use of a hearing aid can prevent the onset of dementia, just that more study needs to be done to find out if that is the case.

More information: Manuella Lech Cantuaria et al, Hearing Loss, Hearing Aid Use, and Risk of Dementia in Older Adults, *JAMA Otolaryngology—Head & Neck Surgery* (2024). [DOI:](#)

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