

Hearing loss and mental health: What's the link?

Hearing health goes far beyond just your patient's ears. Untreated hearing loss can have a domino effect on health, career, relationships and psychological wellbeing.

Someone with an untreated hearing loss can shrink away from activities they usually enjoy. Especially as it becomes difficult to socialise. Our new patients commonly report feelings of embarrassment, frustration or awkwardness at not being able to follow or participate fully in a conversation. This can lead to spending more time at home and even missing out on important moments and milestones.

Isolation can lead to loneliness

Humans are social beings and isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness. While loneliness is distressing at any age, research shows there can be serious health outcomes for those aged 60+. Loneliness can lead to challenges with everyday activities like eating, washing and dressing. It's also known to be a risk factor for mental health disorders including depression, substance abuse, personality disorders and hoarding.

A study published in the American Journal of Audiology found a significant decline in perceptions of loneliness in just a few weeks of hearing aid use.

An elevated risk of depression

A John Hopkins study found that older adults with untreated hearing loss were 57% more likely to experience episodes of stress, depression or bad mood lasting 10 days+. A separate study found that middle-aged adults aren't exempt either – those with hearing impairments are more prone to depression, anxiety, and hostility than those without.

The importance of regular hearing checks in older people

Of course, it's preferable to treat hearing loss before patients experience harmful flow-on effects. Early intervention is the best form of prevention, but it's never too late to help restore and rehabilitate both hearing and quality of life. Of course, not everyone with hearing loss will go on to experience mental illness, but the question is – with help so easily accessible – is taking a chance really worth it?



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