

Sound News

May 2014

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SAR researcher receives multimillion dollar grant to develop hearing aid

Written by Olivia Deng

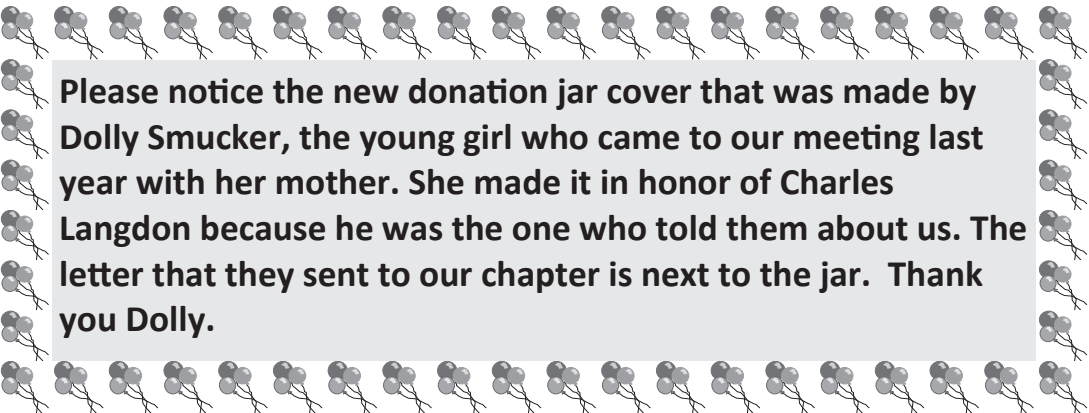
A Boston University professor was awarded a \$2.75 million grant to conduct research on an advanced hearing aid. The grant, which was issued by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, was given to Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences professor of speech, language and hearing sciences Gerald Kidd.

The Visually Guided Hearing Aid, which will be developed by both Kidd and communication research and development corporation Sensimetrics, will feature both a microphone array and an eye tracker to address voids left by existing hearing aids." The VGHA has two main components," Kidd said. "What we have done is combine the two [microphone and eye tracker] so that we put a portable eye tracker on the person wearing the aid, and we steer the beam that's created by the microphone array according to where their eyes are trained."

Though the VGHA seeks to improve hearing for the hearing impaired, individuals who do not suffer from hearing loss may find utility in the product, said Sensimetrics principal research scientist Joseph Desloge. "This kind of system can be used for anyone who wants directional listening," Desloge said. "Like if I, a normal hearing person, were at a party — and sometimes it's just so loud that it's hard to hear people — wearing this would help me focus in on a particular person I want to listen to. So one does not have to be hearing impaired to benefit from this system at all."

Desloge said Kidd approached him for the project a couple years ago and worked with him to write the NIDCD grant proposal. "He put together a big proposal that outlines the work we are going to do," Desloge said. "The proposal was coming up with the research plan, writing it up and throwing it all together ... I helped clarify and write the engineering part of building the system and some of the electro-acoustic measurements."

At the end of the five-year grant, Kidd said he hopes to scientifically validate VGHA and see it be used by the hearing-impaired community." What we would hope is that the ideas and insights that we gain from this would be that a hearing aid company ... would want to partner with us or take our ideas and develop it [VGHA] into a really useful product," he said. "I would love to see these being worn around in the environment and people getting benefits from them in five years."

 Please notice the new donation jar cover that was made by Dolly Smucker, the young girl who came to our meeting last year with her mother. She made it in honor of Charles Langdon because he was the one who told them about us. The letter that they sent to our chapter is next to the jar. Thank you Dolly.

Out of the 264 people injured on the day of the Boston Marathon bombing, the Mass. Office of Victim Assistance (MOVA) now estimates that at least 150 are experiencing hearing loss or tinnitus.

Leone's Lines



.. for every disability you have, you are blessed with more than enough abilities to overcome your challenges.— Nick Vujicic

Go on the internet and read about this young man with NO arms and NO legs who is such an inspiration.

He has turned his disability into ability and become a motivational speaker who reaches thousands with his positive message.

He even surfboards!

"Sometimes you may feel like you are just about to realize your goal only to fall short. That is no reason to quit. Defeat happens only to those who refuse to try again."

Nick Vujicic

iHear Wants To Make Personalized Hearing Aids Available For Everyone

Catherine Shu

About 20% of U.S. adults have some form of hearing loss, but there are very few options available for them in terms of hearing aids. They can either spend thousands of dollars on a prescription hearing aid or buy a cheap device with pre-settings for a couple hundred dollars. 75% to 80% of adults with hearing loss don't have devices, due in large part to lack of insurance. iHear wants to give people with hearing loss an affordable device that they can easily customize at home with a Web-based hearing test. The goal is to ultimately make its hearing aids available for the 350 million people in the world who suffer from impaired hearing. Created by a team led by biomedical engineer and entrepreneur Adnan Shennib, iHear hearing device includes a testing kit and access to iHear's online diagnostic software that starts at \$199. The target ship date is August. They filed for FDA approval and seek coverage from insurance providers.

iHear's donation program will focus on countries where hearing aid penetration is especially low due to high prices and limited distribution, like China.

Shennib wants users to think of iHear's functionality as being similar to a smartphone because you can customize it by downloading new software. Each device can currently hold up to four settings, which wearers can select using a remote control. To set up iHear, users first connect their hearing aid to a computer with a USB device. Then they use iHear's online diagnostic tools to calibrate it. Settings for different environments can be programmed into each device and adjusted whenever the wearer wants. Shennib has spent 24 years developing hearing aids. He founded InSound Medical (now called Phonak), where he created an extended wear, FDA approved hearing aid called Lyric. Shennib was frustrated with reaching hearing impaired people. "We discovered that the advanced technology we developed really ends up being a luxury item for most users. We've created iHear as more of a mission than a company to reach out to those who can't afford hearing solutions."

Members: if you have changed your e-mail address please notify Karin Smith of the change karinsm@efn.org

Hearing Loss Assoc.-Lane County, Oregon Information calls are taken by Linda Diaz 790-1290

HLA A is published monthly for members of Hearing Loss Association of Lane County.

Annual chapter fee of \$10.00 can be mailed to SHHH, Inc. PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402

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National website: www.hearingloss.org

Oregon website: www.hearinglossOR.org



Out & About

Andrea Cabral attended the Oregon State University Gerontology Conference this month and gave out a box of Survivor's Manuals.

Clark Anderson, Tim and Lesley Bergquist took a web design class at the Campbell Center. Hopefully they will be able to understand the workings of our web page better. Lesley used their FM system.

Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is damage to hearing due to longtime exposure to harmful levels of noise, or a one-time exposure to noise at extreme decibels. NIHL is fairly common and many public health experts worry it's happening to more people at younger ages due to listening to music at damaging volumes with the use of headphones. It's estimated that at least 10 million Americans have hearing loss due to noise exposure.

What is noise?

Sound is what we hear when vibrations from the source travel through the air and reach our ears. Noise is defined as unwanted sound.

Noise-induced hearing loss is affecting more and more people every day. In the presence of sounds that are too loud, the vibrations get larger, causing fluid motion in the cochlea that can bend the hair cells to the point of breaking. Hair cells are not replaceable structures. Damaged hair cells are unable to trigger electrical signals to the brain, impeding hearing. Both intense but short noises - such as a nearby gunshot - and repeated or continuous exposure to loud noises - such as operating construction equipment - can damage the hair cells.

The workplace is the most common site of NIHL for most Americans. American law - through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) - requires that employers take precautions to limit employees' hazardous noise exposure. Noise-induced hearing loss can be prevented!

You have trouble understanding what other people are saying, or it sounds like they are mumbling. This could be worse in crowded places. This could suggest high frequency hearing loss, which affects certain sounds only. You have pain in your ears, even a few hours after loud noise exposure. Other people comment that you're talking loudly or shouting. You have tinnitus - ringing, whooshing, roaring or buzzing sounds in your ears. Aside from damaging the hearing, loud noise exposure and NIHL can lead to: Stress, Anxiety, Insomnia, even after noise stops, High blood pressure, Increased heart rate, Isolation due to hearing loss Depression due to hearing loss. There are currently no effective treatments for noise-induced hearing loss or for regenerating the damaged hair cells in the cochlea, though there is some potentially promising research.

Do what you can to protect your hearing now.

Keeping Your Batteries Charged



Information You Can Use

The incoming board of directors of HLA OR are:

Clark Anderson President

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Cathy Sanders treasurer

A new law in South Dakota will allow the state to fund smartphones, tablets and other devices for deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired people. Monthly phone bills for all South Dakotans include a 15 cent charge that helps accessibility for people with a range of disabilities. The fund was established 25 years ago. South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard says the devices that were covered under the telecommunications fund before it was revised by the legislature this year were mostly outdated. Under the new law, people can receive newer devices such as iPads.

CAN APPLE HELP MAKE HEARING AIDS COOL? People wait in long lines and even camp out to get their hands on new Apple devices as soon as they're available. But they drag their feet, sometimes for years, when it comes to purchasing another piece of technology that could greatly improve their lives: hearing aids. Hearing-aid manufacturers and audiologists hope a new collaboration between them and Apple will help.

New Survivor's Manuals –FREE to Anyone. Donations appreciated. Cost to mail copies is \$4 each or 20 for \$35
PO Box 22501
Eugene, OR 97402

Our Lane County chapter has an active website
www.hearinglosslane.org.
Now you can find answers to all the Chapter questions.

Sound News is a publication of HLA Lane Co and is published monthly.
P.O. Box 22501
Eugene OR 97402

When to Get a New Hearing Aid

Your aids are over 5 years old

Most hearing aids last between 5-7 years. All hearing aids will break down at some point because they are very complex technological devices. Even if you take very good care of your device, continued natural exposure to moisture and ear wax has a damaging effect over time.

You've made lifestyle changes

If you begin jogging or hiking, you might want hearing aids that can stand up to more rugged environments, something newer devices may be better suited for. Additionally, if you start a new job with different tasks, you might want a more powerful hearing aid with newer features.

Your finances have improved

Maybe you bought most basic and economical aids. It might be time for an upgrade. Keep their old ones as an extra set in case their new devices need repair.

You've had a change in health

Arthritis might cause you to have less dexterity in your fingers. If you have in-the-canal hearing aids, the small battery door could be difficult to open with limited dexterity, so it might be a good idea to consider new behind-the-ear devices, which have a larger battery door for ease of use.

You might need more powerful hearing aids or a different type of device to suit your changing hearing needs.

You've changed your attitude

It takes people up to 10 years on average to get hearing aids after first being diagnosed with hearing loss and takes a while to learn what it means to hear your best, rather than just better. As you become more comfortable with hearing aids you might want devices with different or more advanced settings .

Need Help Paying Your Monthly Phone Bill? OTAP

Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) may provide a reduction in the monthly telephone bill for Oregonians who receive qualifying benefits.

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Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Having Trouble Or Unable To Communicate By Telephone? TDAP

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E-MAIL: puc.tdap@state.or.us



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Membership in HLAA is \$20 student, \$35 individuals, \$45 for couple/family, \$60 professional. It includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*. Write HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste.

1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 (Voice); 301-657-224 (TTY); 301-913-9413 (Fax) or www.hearingloss.org. Get the latest e-news: <http://www.hearingloss.org/membership/Sen.asp>.

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Hearing Loss Assoc. of Lane County Chapter Fee and National Membership Form

Please fill out this form /survey & mail to HLA - Lane Co., PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

I have enclosed: Chapter fees _____ \$10.00 Chapter Donation of \$ _____
National dues _____ \$35.00 (regular) \$70 _____ (professional)*

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Preferred phone: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Why are you joining us?

What most interests/puzzles you about hearing or hearing devices?

Are you interested in volunteering? What would you like to do?

How did you learn about us _____?

Would you like to be on our email news list: _____ Yes _____ No

*Donations to either the national organization or our local chapter are always welcome and are tax deductible."

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Research for New Hearing Aid	1
Ihear hearing aids	2
Leone's Lines	2
Keeping Your Batteries Charged	3
Noise Induced Hearing Loss	3
When to Get a New Hearing Aid	4
Meeting Information	8

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If the month & year on your mailing label have already passed, it's time to renew your membership! Please use the form on page 6 to pay your dues



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May 8 7 pm

Volunteers Are Us!

Civic and Community Volunteering

Pat Reilly, a former history teacher, and retired auto mechanic is the kind of person you would want to "have your back", because you can depend on him to volunteer his time for whatever you need. Pat was voted "Volunteer of the Month - Civic and Community", and he certainly has earned the title! Pat has volunteered a minimum of 630 hours since 2007, just to the Eugene police department alone! Pat has been a volunteer to our HLA newspaper by processing the chapter's newsletter for bulk mailing. Pat has a sense of gratitude for hearing aids after he was fitted for a pair, with help from Vocational rehabilitation, and HLA. Pat will be speaking about how he came to get hearing aids and became involved in HLA. He plans to do an interactive exercise to show how hearing loss does not hinder things we do in life, and volunteering, in spite of being hearing impaired. He will also share various aspects of his life, and the volunteer work he does.

Calendar

Board Meeting Apr 29

2580 Hilyard
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Membership meetings are the 2nd Thursday of the month. They are accessible for all degrees of hearing loss by amplification—loop assistive listening systems.
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