

UNTREATED HEARING LOSS INCREASES MEDICAL EXPENSES

When it comes to medical care most people want the same things: to prevent problems as well as to fix them, and with as little expense as necessary.

Research done by the Johns Hopkins School for Public Health analyzed medical claims data for 4,728 people over ten years. They found that older adults with untreated hearing loss pay much more in total health care costs over that time, averaging \$22,434, which is 46% more than the people who did not have hearing loss.

In addition, the persons with hearing loss had significantly higher chances of emergency room visits, hospital stays, hospital readmission within 30 days, and had 52% more outpatient visits.

Though researchers did not specifically look for the causes of this connection, it is simple to see some potential relationships. Persons with untreated hearing loss will generally have more difficulty understanding a doctor's or pharmacist's instructions, so are less likely to follow treatment instructions accurately. Persons with hearing loss lose many of their social connections and activities when they aren't able to participate in conversations easily, which leads to depression, which is known to be independently related to physical decline.

Adding this to the many studies showing that untreated hearing loss is directly related to faster brain shrinkage, dementia, and falls, hearing aids are now being considered necessary medical treatment rather than the luxury they once were.

We make this treatment more easily available and less expensive for you and your extended family through our partnership with HEAR In America Hearing Plans. Please read this information carefully and consider if anyone in your extended family should have their hearing checked. If one of your family members has hearing loss that creates additional difficulty for you, so they are covered by this plan as well. We are confident that this small step can help promote healthy aging for many people.

For more research see www.jhsph.edu and www.betterhearing.org