

# Aging: loss of hearing sensitivity of the elderly (presbycusis)

## Abstract

Aging, consensually assumed as a process that affects and alters significantly the cognitive and behavioral functions of the human being encompassing multiple effects on a number of clinically significant variables, the most important being those that directly relate to the movement, ability to balance the effectiveness of mental functioning and sensory functions such as taste, smell, sight and hearing. Hearing loss in the elderly, scientifically called presbycusis arises quietly and is increased progressively with advancing age. This study had as its aim to contribute to the best quality of life for elderly individuals with hearing loss (presbycusis). Thus, the objectives targeted were: trying to understand the motivations of the elderly to the use of hearing aids; determine the degree of satisfaction of users of these prostheses; evaluate how Presbycusis affects the quality of life of the elderly. The method used was qualitative oriented once interviewed the elderly users of the home. The sample was composed of 30 participants, with presbycusis, 25 female and 5 male (institutionalized seniors) from the city of Braga/Portugal. The instrument used was the semi-structured interview and through informal procedures and in a climate of dialogue facilitator and promoter of a simple and open speech.

**Keywords:** loss of hearing, old age, presbycusis, hearing aids, quality of life

Volume 3 Issue 2 - 2018

**Filomena Ermida da Ponte, Eleonora Veiga**  
Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal, Portugal

**Correspondence:** Filomena Ermida da Ponte, Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal, Tel +351253206100, Email [filomenaponte@hotmail.com](mailto:filomenaponte@hotmail.com)

**Received:** August 21, 2017 | **Published:** April 05, 2018

## Introduction

After the literature consulted, our theoretical options for this small study were based on an attempt to minimize the consequences of hearing loss, typically expressed in feelings of insecurity, disability, depression and isolation, increasing dramatic changes in the quality of life of the elderly. These problems caused by sensory deprivation of hearing can be minimized by the use of hearing aids, promoting better communication skills. According to the literature, the prevalence of the use of these prostheses for the elderly is quite low, being the first moments of acquisition considered critical periods of adaptation, with risk of rejection by the elderly.

## Concept

### Presbycusis

Etymologically, presbycusis of presbi (old) and acusia (hearing) means “hearing of the elderly” as well as general aging of the whole organism.<sup>1</sup> Hearing loss in the third age, scientifically designated by presbycusis, appears discreetly and progressively increases with advancing age. Conscious of the impact of this problem, in terms of psychosocial consequences (eg., isolation, communication difficulty, anxiety, frustration, depression) and the constraints that this entails, it is our objective in this study to alert to “auditory care” for the quality of life of the elderly. This senescence process places individuals in a situation of greater vulnerability to the disease, such as chronic health problems that limit their quality of life. The elderly person’s hearing loss reflects radical changes in their quality of life. These problems caused by sensory deprivation of hearing can be minimized by the use of hearing aids, developing better communication skills and social integration.

## Goals

This small research aims to contribute to the achievement of the best quality of life for the elderly with hearing loss (presbycusis). Thus:

- We asked about the motivations for the use of hearing aids.
- We verified the degree of satisfaction of the users of these prostheses.
- We identified barriers encountered in the use and maintenance of prostheses.
- We evaluate how the lack of hearing in the elderly interferes with their quality of life.M

## Method

The sample consisted of 30 participants, with presbycusis, 25 females and 5 males (institutionalized elderly) from the city of Braga / Portugal. The instrument used was the technique of interview as the main way for multiple realities (Stake, 2007). Thus, we plan individual, semi-structured and face-to-face interviews. Informal and in a climate that facilitates dialogue and promotes a speech that is fluent and easy to understand.

## Results

The results of our research suggest that most of the elderly do not adhere to the use of hearing aids. According to Russo<sup>2</sup> we analyze the behavior and the arguments of these individuals in relation to the auditory prosthesis test. It is concluded that non-adherence to this resource is due to financial problems, aesthetic reasons, (in) convenience, difficult manipulation of controls and residual sounds.

It was verified that the elderly needed speech-language therapy after hearing aid adaptation. According to the literature, the prevalence of hearing aids in the elderly is low and, in the first year after acquisition, it is considered the critical period of adaptation, within which there is a risk of not using the prosthesis. In order to obtain better results in auditory rehabilitation, we believe that the involvement of family members, close friends, health professionals and the surrounding society through informative campaigns would be a highly relevant strategy for overcoming prejudice, which still exists, and for the reconstruction of the lives of the elderly, personally and socially.

## Conclusion

We conclude, therefore, that presbycusis is a decline in the status of the elderly, depriving them of communication and promoter of isolation, associated with self-decay. The aim of this study is to emphasize prevention, encouraging periodic examination, seeking the ideal means to avoid “hearing loss,” or finding ways to promote a less invasive setting at the level of each, and for the benefit of all, corroborating the studies by Silva R & Almeida L.<sup>3</sup> It was concluded, through the participants’ testimony, that the use of the prosthesis contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of the elderly, while emphasizing the limitations presented by it. Aware of the technical progress, the high quality of the prostheses presently prescribed, as well as the information and awareness for its use, is consensually described. The current accession is much higher and the results are quite satisfactory. In this small study, we try to capture the essence. of what we consider the subject of the article: Psychosocial consequences of hearing loss of elderly people, stressing the importance, as stated by Peixoto R & Mattos L.<sup>4</sup> of conscientization for the use of these prosthetics associated to a rehabilitation program to help minimize psychosocial reactions from hearing loss in the elderly.<sup>5-7</sup>

## Acknowledgements

None.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Hungria H. *Otorrinolaringologia*. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara Koogan. 2000;443–447.
2. Russo ICP. *Uso de próteses auditivas em idosos portadores de presbiacusia*: Revinter: Rio de Janeiro; 1998.
3. Russo IP. *Intervenção fonoaudiológica na terceira idade*. Revinter: Rio de Janeiro, In: Silva R, Almeida L, editors. *Hearing prostheses for elderly: psychosocial features, adaptation and quality of life*. *Interações*, Campo Grande MS, 2016;17(3):463–474.
4. Peixoto R, Mattos L. *Audiologia do envelhecimento: Revisão da literatura e perspectivas atuais*. *Rev Bras Otorrinolaringol*. 2007;73:1.
5. Boger M, Barreto M, Sampaio A. *A hearing loss in elderly and interference in language and psychosocial life*. *Revista Eletrônica Gestão & Saúde*. 2016;1982-4785.
6. Menezes C, Mário M, Marchori. *Prevalence of hearing loss and associated factors in elderly population: Londrina, Paraná*; 2010.
7. World Health Organization (WHO/OMS). *Deafness and hearing impairment*; 2012.