

SMART Study

Winter Newsletter 2013

Welcome to our first issue!

You are reading the first edition of the SMART Study Newsletter. We have decided to send a newsletter twice a year to keep our dedicated participants informed about the SMART study. In this newsletter, you will be told about:

1. SMART Study Progress
2. SMART Study Updates
3. Researchers on the SMART study
4. Useful information on hearing loss

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please address them to the editor, Caitlin Blake, at cblake11@jhmi.edu or 410-614-9825.



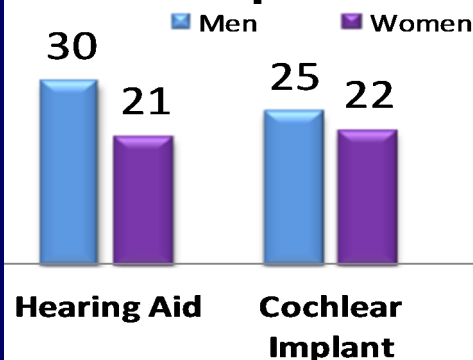
Studying Multiple Outcomes after Aural Rehabilitative Treatment Study I



Study Progress



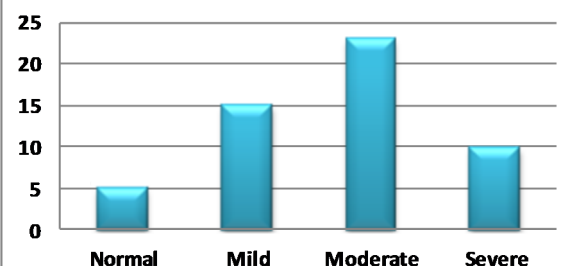
SMART Study Population



We have 98 enrolled participants, 55 men, 43 women. 51 of the participants are hearing aid users and 47 are cochlear implant users. Most participants have moderate hearing loss.

We are still early into our study, so we do not yet have results on how participants' scores have changed over a year period. We hope to have some initial findings for you by the Summer 2013 newsletter.

Participant's Hearing Loss Category



Get to know the study team



Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D
Principal Investigator

Dr. Lin is a Baltimore native and did his medical, residency, and research training all at Johns Hopkins. He got away briefly to do his fellowship in Switzerland before coming back to pursue an academic career dedicated to treating and studying hearing loss in older adults. Outside of work, Dr. Lin spends nearly all of his time with his wife, two young children, and the many animals in their house (Dr. Lin's wife is a vet)

Caitlin grew up in a rural area near Bucks County, PA. She was surrounded by cows, donkeys, and goats. She received her Masters degree from Johns Hopkins. She loves to play sports and has played basketball, lacrosse, soccer, and ran XC. One of her favorite things that she has ever done was take a road trip to Nashville, where she faced her fear of heights and jumped off a cliff!

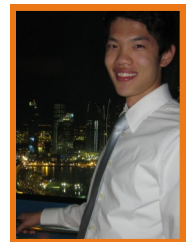


Caitlin Blake
Research Coordinator



Dane Genter, M.D.
Cortisol Research

Dane went to medical school at University of Michigan. Two years ago he moved to Baltimore to pursue surgical training at Johns Hopkins. He is currently on a 2-year dedicated research rotation, so he spends his time with study participants and analyzing data. Outside of work, he enjoys golf, football, family and friends, and reading. One interesting fact about Dane is that he can walk on his hands!



David Chen
Physical Function Research

David is a Maryland native; his hometown is Clarksville and he attended college at the University of Maryland. He is currently a 4th year medical student at Johns Hopkins. He is undertaking a year of research under the mentorship of Dr. Lin to study hearing loss and physical functioning. He enjoys rock climbing, snow boarding, and being outdoors. He also enjoys playing the piano and ukulele.



Barnett Shpritz
Psychometrist

Barnett was born and raised in Baltimore, and he has lived in Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles. Other than working at Johns Hopkins for 13 years and publishing articles on cognition and Huntington's disease. In his spare time, he loves to do Sudoku and crossword puzzles. He has also done acting in community theatre, feature films, and commercials. He got his SAG card after having been cast as the Little Man in the Dirt Bike Kid, which you can see on YouTube. He also got to spin the wheel when he was a contestant on the Wheel of Fortune!

Jennifer was born in Kentucky, but she moved all over as a kid since her dad was in the Army. She attended Stevenson University in Maryland, and she went to Loyola University Maryland for her Masters degree. Every year she goes to a ton of concerts, and her favorite band is Aerosmith. She has an Australian Shepherd named Muggy who is a handful, but she loves him to pieces!



Jennifer Walsh
Psychometrist

What's new with the study

We are constantly working to make the SMART Study the best it can be. Here is how it has improved.

1. PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

We want to thank you for your time and effort. We purchased SMART study bags, pens, and magnets. At your next SMART study visit, we will make sure to give you a fun colored tote, magnet, and pen.

2. \$10 Check

We know how silly that \$10 check was. How annoying to drive to cash it! We will now give you a \$10 meal voucher to use at almost all Hopkins eateries. This way, you can grab a snack or lunch on the day of your visit. If you don't want to use the voucher during the study visit, you can save the voucher for another time you will be at Hopkins.

Our study wants to be able to understand how hearing loss affects older adults. Here are some new things we are now studying in our SMART study participants.

CORTISOL MEASUREMENTS

Anyone who has hearing loss knows how stressful it can be! Straining to hear people and asking others to repeat themselves can be draining. We are now measuring the stress hormone cortisol to see if treating hearing loss can lower stress levels. We measure the stress hormone cortisol through hair and saliva samples. New participants are now asked to give a few strands of hair and collect saliva samples when they go home.

Questions on cortisol can be directed to dgenthe2@jhmi.edu

PHYSICAL TASKS

People with hearing loss are more likely to fall and have walking issues. But, we do not know if treating hearing loss will help to improve patients' physical functioning.

That is why we now ask new participants to complete standing and walking tasks. For some of the walking tasks, participants are asked to do math or say the alphabet as they walk, so we can see how walking is impacted when you have to multi-task.

Questions on physical functioning can be directed to dchen38@jhmi.edu

Hearing Loops: What they are and why they are really important

What is a hearing loop?

A hearing loop is a system that can give you clearer, enhanced sound when using your cochlear implant or hearing aids.

Hearing loops are thin metal wires that are installed in ceilings and floors of public areas. The loops act like antennae. Local microphones pick up the sound and wirelessly transmit the sound directly to your hearing device using the hearing device's t-coil.

"...many even cry with relief because the improvement in sound quality is so dramatic"

-Dr. Lin

What is a t-coil, and how do I know if I have one?

The t-coil is found in most hearing aids and cochlear implants. The setting is typically called the "T" setting. Ask your audiologist about your hearing device's t-coil.

What if my hearing aid does not have the t-coil?

You can still benefit from the hearing loop, but you will need to use a portable receiver with head phones.

Where are there hearing loops?

While this is not a new technology, the system is just beginning to catch on in the United States and are only found in select locations. Dr. Lin has recently advocated for the system at Hopkins, and the Listening Center is now looped! At your next visit, look for the Hearing Loop sign, and test it out for yourself.



Learn more about hearing loops by going to www.hearingloop.org or checking out the links on www.linresearch.org under "More" tab.

Hope you enjoyed it!

We hope you found this newsletter useful. If you have any questions, or need to schedule a follow-up appointment, please contact Caitlin Blake @ 410-614-9825 or cblake11@jhmi.edu.

