

13th International Conference on

Alzheimers Disease and Dementia

November 25-26, 2019 | Frankfurt, Germany

Environmental Noise Impact on aging hearing health and Sensorineural Speech Processing


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This presentation outlines hearing health damage and sensorineural speech processing deficits in aging populations caused by environmental noise exceeding public health limits internationally. Irreversible sensory (cochlear) and neural (auditory nerve) damage includes hidden hearing loss, tinnitus, speech-to-noise ratio loss, noise-induced hearing impairment, and accelerated age-related hearing loss (presbycusis). Sensorineural speech processing abilities differ greatly between late-onset sensory presbycusis in people with no hazardous exposure and early-onset neural presbycusis in people

with a history of high environmental noise exposure. Widespread untreated hearing impairment increases risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Environmental noise levels causing speech interference impact vulnerable populations including people with aging hearing health, sensorineural speech processing deficits, and/or cognitive declines. Quieter noise levels meeting public health limits are urgently needed to protect hearing health and improve access in public spaces for aging populations with quiet communication needs.

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