Untreated hearing loss is an issue of growing importance; by 2031, there will be 15.6 million people with hearing loss in the UK. After viewing images of hearing aids and hearables, 57% of those with hearing loss but not currently using hearing aids regularly and 7% were 70+ yrs.

Attitudes towards hearing healthcare tended to be less positive amongst adults with hearing loss that were currently not using hearing aids (fig. 3). The majority of respondents, 51%, had never received a hearing test. Of those who had received a hearing test, 66% reported having normal hearing and 34% had a hearing loss (with <1% regularly using hearing aids) (fig. 1). Free text responses to questions on the reasons for non-use showed varied factors including cost, association with ageing and limit impact on daily activities (fig. 2).

• Untreated hearing loss is an issue of growing importance; by 2031, there will be 15.6 million people with hearing loss in the UK.

• 40% of people over 50 years old have hearing loss (RNID, 2020)

• Currently, only 40% of those who could benefit from hearing aids have them, and 20% of those do not use them.

• Reasons for low uptake include stigmatization, low trust in hearing aid benefit, cognitive restrictions, and cost, amongst others (Meister, et al., 2008)

• The growing number of adults in the UK with untreated hearing loss has consequences beyond that of communication difficulties, such as social isolation and negative effects on mental health, education and employment. (Saito et al., 2010; Acar et al., 2011, RNID, 2013)

To explore (1) perceived attractiveness of hearing aid and hearable technologies and (2) willingness to use hearing aid vs hearable technologies.

An online survey of UK adults (N=239) was conducted using the Prolific platform, with a filter set to recruit only participants over 50 years. Participants answered questions on their hearing status, experiences with hearing healthcare & technologies. They were asked about their attitudes towards hearing healthcare and technologies before and after viewing images of hearing aids & hearables, and asked to rate their willingness to use these technologies.

55% of respondents were 50-59 yrs, 38% 60-69 yrs and 7% were 70+ yrs. 67% - Female, 33% male.

The majority of respondents, 51%, had never received a hearing test. Of those who had received a hearing test, 66% reported having normal hearing and 34% had a hearing loss (with <1% regularly using hearing aids) (fig. 1).

Free text responses to questions on the reasons for non-use showed varied factors including cost, association with ageing and limit impact on daily activities (fig. 2).

• 55% of respondents reported already using wireless earphones or headphones for audio streaming.

• After viewing images of hearing aids and hearables, 57% of those with normal hearing, 67% of those with hearing loss but not currently using hearing aids and 88% of those using hearing aids selected hearables as the hearing device they preferred to use (fig. 3).

• Attitudes towards hearing healthcare tended to be less positive amongst adults with hearing loss that were currently not using hearing aids than in those untested or with normal hearing (fig. 5).

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the high prevalence of hearing loss in adults over 50 years, a smaller proportion of respondents reported having a hearing loss. The results indicate that adults at risk of hearing loss may be more willing to consider hearing technologies in a hearable format (fig. 4) and that willingness to consider or recommend hearing healthcare tended to be lower in adults with hearing loss.

REFERENCES


Aims: To explore (1) perceived attractiveness of hearing aid and hearable technologies and (2) willingness to use hearing aid vs hearable technologies.

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