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Auditory Deprivation

A Note on Auditory Deprivation

Recent studies show that a lack of adequate auditory stimulus might decrease auditory performance. In other words, our brains' ability to understand words is reduced if we are deprived of sound for prolonged periods of time. This decreased performance also applies to people who have hearing loss and wear a hearing aid in only one ear. In a 2-3 year period, the unaided ear (ear without hearing aid) may experience a decrease in function which may be irreversible. This does not mean that wearing one hearing aid is bad, it means that not wearing hearing aids in the presence of a hearing loss could cause decreased speech understanding in the un-aided ear(s).

The Eriksholm Consensus Conference held in Copenhagen on August 1995 brought together leading authorities from around the world to discuss auditory deprivation.

The statement says, among other things that *A substantial number of subjects who possess at least a moderate degree of bilateral hearing loss (both ears) but receive unilateral hearing aid fittings (a hearing aid in only one ear), display (auditory deprivation) in the unaided ear. This "effect" is manifested as a reduction in speech recognition, which in some cases seems to be reversible.

*These results were published in the June, 1996 Issue of Ear and Hearing and The Hearing Journal, February 1997.