

# Media Release

## Phonak introduces ECHHO program to enhance understanding of the link between hearing loss and cognitive health

**Stäfa, Switzerland, July 18, 2023 – On the heels of new studies showing that treating hearing loss in older adults may slow down cognitive decline, Phonak, a global leader in providing life-changing hearing solutions, is pleased to announce ECHHO (Enhancing Cognitive Health via Hearing Optimization). This dedicated training program aims to empower hearing care professionals (HCPs) with the knowledge and tools to better integrate the cognitive health aspect into their discussions with clients. The ECHHO program, which will be rolled out in Fall 2023, includes comprehensive training for hearing care professionals.**



Recent studies have shed light on the potential link between hearing loss and cognitive decline, emphasizing the broader impact on overall well-being and quality of life. While there is no cure for dementia and hearing aids cannot be considered a panacea, Phonak recognizes the importance of fostering social participation and promoting an active lifestyle through their innovative hearing solutions.

Phonak has decided to develop the ECHHO training program to encourage hearing care professionals (HCPs) to integrate cognitive health in their audiological counselling with their clients to strengthen the understanding of the benefits of hearing technology beyond just hearing better. This program will include:

- Latest research and evidence about hearing intervention's impact on cognitive well-being
- The relationship between hearing loss and cognition
- Audiological best practices for integrating cognition into the clinical conversation
- Working with clients with or exhibiting signs of cognitive decline or dementia

Angela Pelosi, Phonak Senior Director Audiology, says: "At Phonak, we recognize the profound impact that hearing health can have on cognitive well-being. We believe that by proactively addressing hearing loss and promoting healthy living, we can help mitigate the risk of cognitive decline and positively impact the overall well-being of individuals. The ECHHO program represents

our dedication to advancing the field of holistic hearing care and underscores our commitment to providing life-changing solutions for our clients."

Today, new results have been released from two studies which provide additional evidence supporting the potential benefits of hearing intervention including hearing aids in preserving cognitive function over time.

The ACHIEVE and ENHANCE studies incorporate longitudinal observations, best practice audiological management, controlled hearing interventions, and comprehensive cognitive assessments to provide more insight into the causal relationship between hearing loss and cognition.

**ACHIEVE** (Aging and Cognitive Health Evaluation in Elders) - Randomized Controlled Trial  
Published in The Lancet on July 18

sample size of n=987

three-year follow-up

Key findings:

- In older adults at increased risk for cognitive decline, hearing intervention slowed down loss of thinking and memory abilities by 48% over 3 years.
- Specifically with memory, participants in the heart health study group who received the hearing intervention, on average, had no declines in memory over the 3-year period compared to a decrease in memory seen in participants who received the control intervention.
- Treating hearing loss in older adults at increased risk for cognitive decline slows down loss of thinking and memory abilities

**ENHANCE** (Evaluation of Hearing Aids and Cognitive Effects) - Prospective Cohort Study

sample size of n=160

three-year follow-up

Key findings:

- Comparatively, cognition at 3-year follow-up was stable overall for hearing aid users but declined for the non-hearing aid user group
- Treatment of hearing loss with hearing aids may delay cognitive decline
- Referral to hearing screening and rehabilitation may assist with delaying/minimizing cognitive decline in older adults.

Both studies were supported by Sonova's research program and an in-kind donation of Phonak hearing aids. Sonova and its brand Phonak have been supporting clinical research for a long time and are committed to further supporting and driving evidence in the field of holistic hearing care.

For more information about Phonak and the ECHHO program, please visit [Phonak website](#).

For online hearing test, please visit [here](#).

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**About Phonak**

**life is on.** Since 1947, Phonak has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with hearing loss. Seventy-five years later, our passion for creating life-changing hearing solutions that help people thrive physically, socially, and emotionally remains. By offering the industry's broadest portfolio of hearing solutions, we're committed to creating a world where "life is on" for everyone. At Phonak, innovation is not limited to products. We work to change the conversations surrounding people with hearing loss. We do this by fighting the stigma of hearing aids and creating an understanding of how hearing is connected to the broader context of healthy living.

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