

**Exploration of Hearing-Loss Specific Quality of Life for Adults with Hearing Loss
and their Communication Partners**

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Purpose of the Study: Hearing loss can lead to communication loss, which affects not only the person with a hearing loss, but everyone in the communication situation. Moreover, hearing loss can result in various physical, mental, and psychosocial effects for both the person with a hearing loss and their communication partner (i.e., significant other). Although spouses of persons with a hearing loss may not have a health condition themselves, they may experience activity limitations and participation restrictions due to their spouses' hearing loss. This is referred to as a 'third-party disability.' The poster session presents the findings and themes associated with the experiences of hearing-loss specific quality of life with adults with hearing loss and their communication partners.

Methods: A case study methodology was chosen because of the exploratory nature of the case study which involves varied combinations of interviews, evaluations, data collection, and data analysis. Four couples (i.e., four adults with hearing loss and four communication partners) participated in the study were interviewed using a content-valid interview questionnaire. Participants ranged in age from 62.3 months to 81 years, 10 months with a mean of 71 years, 7 months. Six were Caucasian, one was Asian/Pacific Islander, and one was Hispanic. All participants were retired with a minimum college education of a bachelor's degree. Each of the four couples were interviewed at a location convenient for each couple.

The questionnaire used to investigate the experience of hearing-loss specific quality of life was designed with four major sections: (a) person with hearing loss' experience of their hearing loss-specific quality of life, (b) communication partner's experience of their hearing loss-specific quality of life, (c) person with hearing loss' experience of the communication partner's hearing loss-specific quality of life and (d) communication partner's experience of the person with hearing loss's hearing loss-specific quality of life. The videorecorded interviews lasted between one to two hours in duration.

Analysis: The video recorded interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions were given a line-by-line analysis. These lines were summarized in marginal text boxes using an open coding method. Responses were transferred to index cards in order to further examine information and create broader, intermediate codes with respect to each question. The index cards were rearranged using a selective coding method. The data then were organized and labeled into categories using descriptive terms based on the actual language from the participants. After grouping the categories and alphabetizing them, the data were placed into appropriate categories, and an analysis performed. As needed, the recoding of data occurred based on the emergence of new categories.

Results: This study is currently a work in progress and common qualities and themes for the persons with hearing loss and the communication partners will be identified. The next step in this case study will be the handling of the data, resulting in a thematic synthesis.