

Be part of the conversation: audiology messaging during a hearing screening

Craig St. Jean (1), Bill Hodgetts (1), Jacqueline Cummine (1)

(1) University of Alberta

Objectives: 1) To investigate whether openness to hearing loss treatment varies as a function of how messages about treatment are framed, and

2) to determine whether this openness differs as a function of invoking a temporary failed hearing screening for participants.

Background: The moment patients learn they have hearing loss (e.g., following a failed hearing screening) is a critical juncture on their journey to treatment. The information they encounter at this time may have an important impact on their decisions about the next steps they take. Message framing (i.e., the positive or negative manner in which information is presented) has been explored in a wide range of health contexts as a method for shaping patients' decision making. While previous research has investigated the public's attitudes about differently-framed messages promoting hearing loss treatment, help-seeking behavior in the presence of differing hearing health messages has yet to be examined.

Methods: Participants were invited to take a Hearing in Noise Test. In the sound booth, participants saw a poster bearing either a positively-framed ("Be Part of the Conversation") or negatively-framed message ("Don't Fade into the Background") about hearing loss treatment. During the test, half the participants were interrupted by the researcher who stated that their performance appeared to suggest a hearing loss, with the possibility that it might be due to an equipment malfunction. While the researcher investigated the problem, the participants completed a questionnaire measuring their openness to seeking help for hearing loss. Participants in the control group completed the same questionnaire with no such interruption.

Results: Data collection is ongoing and will be completed by October.

Conclusions: Conclusions will be presented at the meeting.