

International Conference and Expo on **Audiology and Hearing Devices**

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Alzheimer's & hearing loss in older adults: A new paradigm in hearing health 2015

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Objective: To help attendees integrate concepts of cognitive health issues of hearing impaired older adults into hearing health practice, while educating the larger allied professional community on the need for correction of hearing impairment in older adults.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explore the interaction of symptoms of hearing loss and Alzheimer's disease in older adults.
- Understand the difficulties that arise when undetected hearing loss causes misdiagnoses/overdiagnoses of Alzheimer's in older adults.
- Gain the skills in taking case history, fitting and dispensing hearing instruments, and counseling the hearing impaired and family members in cases where AD is suspected.
- Effectively communicate with the larger allied professional healthcare team of the need for evaluation and resolution of hearing loss before concluding mental health diagnoses.

Background: Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative syndrome of cognitive and psychosocial behaviors that, in many cases, is often difficult to diagnose. There is rising concern within the hearing health community that undiagnosed, untreated hearing loss combined with normal aging factors are driving a sizable portion of the increase in Alzheimer's diagnoses among today's older adults. Despite the many studies already indicating a strong correlation between the behaviors of hearing loss and cognitive dysfunction, there appears to be no substantial movement within the mental health field to require the assessment and mitigation of auditory limitations before concluding mental health diagnosis in older adults. This course will explore not only the need for correction of hearing loss in older adults, but also that such correction can bring improvements in mental health status, including such functions as short-term memory, cognition, and personal well-being. It will also show how dispensing professionals may: 1) Detect and discuss auditory/cognitive concerns during the case history and audiometric examination, 2) work optimally with such individuals in achieving best-aided condition within a comprehensive auditory rehabilitative plan, and 3) interact within the larger community health care team, including referral and educating local mental health professionals about hearing loss and its cognitive and psychosocial effects upon older adults. An updated literature review will accompany handout material, as well as aids for the professional dispenser to utilize within a best practice standards framework.

Biography

Max Stanley Chartrand serves on the advisory committees to the American Tinnitus Association, the Better Hearing Institute, Audiology Online, and is a professional member of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, on the Federal & State Advocacy Committee of the International Hearing Society, and the Advisory Committee for the Arizona Division of Hearing Aid Dispenser Licensing. He is also a Professor of Behavioral Medicine and has served on numerous doctoral research committees relative to human health and the hearing sciences. In 1994, he was recipient of the Joel S. Wernick Excellence in Education Award, and has published and lectured extensively throughout the world over the past four decades.

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