

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

August 17-18, 2015 Birmingham, UK

Transforming society through how we market hearing technology

Curtis J Alcock

Audira »Think Tank for Hearing, UK

Hearing technology has evolved beyond recognition since its introduction over a century ago, yet many of the attitudes society has towards it, and to the people who use it, have failed to keep pace. The 'hearing aid' is perceived by many as the separator between having 'normal' hearing, and being deaf or hearing impaired—and therefore actively avoided or perceived as irrelevant by those 'not ready' to see themselves that way. This is despite the fact that the effect of their using hearing technology would put them far closer to what others expect from their hearing than if they were not to use it. The traditional response of both the industry and the profession has been to market hearing technology as something to be hidden, but in doing so have unintentionally reinforced the idea that 'nobody wants' hearing technology, that it is something to be embarrassed about, and that having a hearing loss is 'shameful'. Is it possible to break these vicious cycles? Is it possible to market hearing technology in a way that modernises society's attitudes towards it? The answer lies not in clever marketing campaigns or new products launches, but in understanding how society forms their collective attitude towards hearing healthcare. We also look at how other health products and habits once regarded negatively or as irrelevant by the majority have transformed themselves into something we all take for granted today. We then introduce a practical framework for bringing society's attitudes towards hearing technology into the 21st century.

curtis.alcock@audira.info

Technological advances in sound-based approaches to tinnitus treatment

Deborah Hall

University of Nottingham, UK

The past decade has seen increased drive to comprehend chronic subjective tinnitus from the perspectives of improving both scientific understanding and clinical management. At the same time, there is significant interest and commercial investment in providing targeted and individualized approaches to care which incorporate novel sound-based technologies, with standard audiological and psychological strategies. Within our lab we have explored an experimental intervention based on frequency-discrimination training, while numerous other sound-based devices for tinnitus are already available as commercial products. Many of these interventions overtly claim to target the underlying neurological causes of tinnitus. In this talk, I briefly give a scientific appraisal of these claims. I conclude that although many of the recent technological innovations for individualized sound-based interventions make reference to central auditory mechanisms as a key underlying principle for their efficacy, there is insufficient evidence to strongly support those claims.

Deborah.Hall@nottingham.ac.uk

Notes: