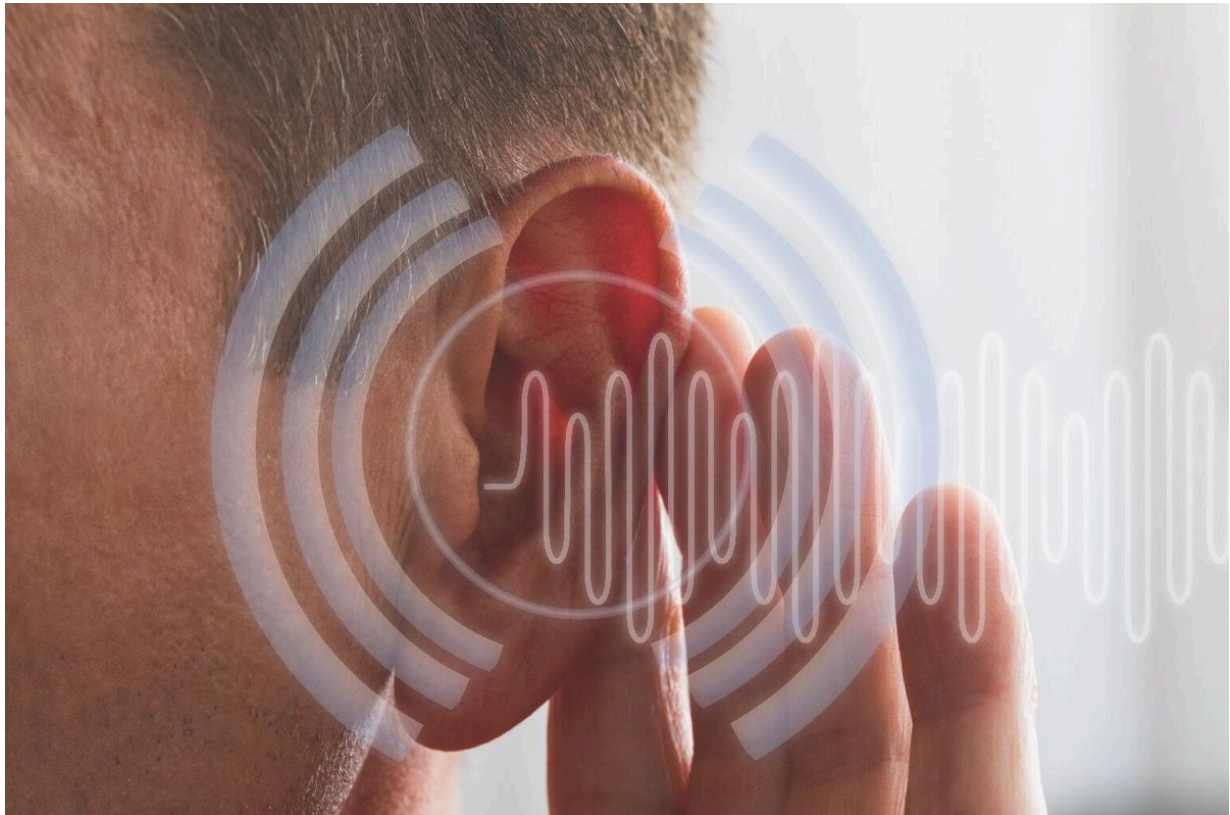


New study links hearing loss, Parkinson's disease

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A new study from a database of millions of veterans nationwide reveals a possible connection between hearing loss and Parkinson's disease.

The VA Portland Health Care System has collaborated with Oregon Health & Science University on a study published Oct. 21 in the journal JAMA Neurology sought out to examine whether hearing loss could be a potential risk factor for Parkinson's disease (PD).

"Parkinson's disease affects over one million Americans and disproportionately impacts veterans," according to a release from the VA Portland Health Care System.

Researchers took advantage of the unique medical record system at the Department of Veterans Affairs to explore possible links between the disease and hearing loss.

The study examined 7,296,051 US Veterans with an audiogram between January 1, 1999 and December 30, 2022.

"Results showed that those with hearing loss have a much higher risk of developing PD later in life. Research also showed that those who have the worst hearing loss seemed to have the highest risk of developing PD," the release states.

The study also looked at any link between the use of hearing aids and lowering the risk of developing PD.

Researchers found that as long as people got a hearing aid within two years of having an abnormal hearing test, their risk of developing PD later in life was lowered substantially. Therefore, widespread screening for hearing loss and appropriate use of hearing aids may reduce the incidence of PD. Additional studies are needed to examine potential underlying mechanisms underlying the association between hearing loss and PD, the release states.

"We still have much to learn about how hearing loss contributes to the disease and how hearing aids might work to lower one's risk for getting PD," said lead author Lee Neilson, M.D. a staff neurologist for the Portland VA and assistant professor of neurology in the OHSU School of Medicine. "Considering there are few downsides to getting screened and fitted for a hearing aid, we would encourage everyone to do it."

Read the full study and its findings at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaneurology/currentissue>