

Studies Link Vestibular/Balance Disorders and Dizziness to Hearing Ability and Falls in Older Americans

Balance Awareness Week is Sept. 13-19, 2020

RESTON, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, September 11, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [American Academy of Audiology](#) has partnered with the [Vestibular Disorders Association](#) for Balance



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*Catherine Palmer, Ph.D.,
president of the American
Academy of Audiology*

Awareness Week, September 13 to 19, to remind Americans about the importance of good hearing health in preventing falls as well as other conditions.

Vestibular/balance disorders, including vertigo and dizziness, often associated with hearing loss, cause a number of conditions including depression, anxiety, panic disorders, fainting or light-headedness, nausea and imbalance.

Falls are the leading cause of injury and death in older adults. While there are many reasons why older adults are at risk of falling including medications, vision loss, diabetes, heart disease and confusion; hearing loss also is

associated with a higher risk for falling. "We know that there's a direct link between hearing loss and falls," said Catherine Palmer, Ph.D., president of the American Academy of Audiology; professor, University of Pittsburgh and director of audiology for the UPMC Health System. Those with symptoms impacting their balance should see an audiologist. "Audiologists perform an extensive battery of tests as part of the evaluation of the vestibular system," Palmer explained. Depending on the findings of the exams, an audiologist may provide management options and, in some cases, may refer the patient to an otolaryngologist, neurologist or physical therapist.

"Balance Awareness Week provides educational information so that consumers know where to turn when they have dizziness, feel faint or have balance issues," said Palmer. She also explained that audiologists are the primary healthcare professionals who diagnose, treat and manage hearing loss and balance disorders in patients of all ages. Tinnitus, which is a type of ringing in the ears, also can be associated with balance issues.

Vestibular symptoms and dizziness are significant problems in older Americans. It is estimated

that 30% of persons older than 60 years and almost 50% of those over the age of 85 years have dizziness and balance challenges along with related symptoms. According to a study, by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, individuals with untreated mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 48 million Americans have some form of hearing loss. Those numbers continue to rise annually. For more information on vestibular disorders related to balance, click [here](#). For more information on hearing loss or to find an audiologist, go to [howsyourhearing.org](https://www.howsyourhearing.org).

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The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists. Representing the interests of approximately 14,000 audiologists nationwide, the Academy is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. For more information or to find an audiologist, go to www.howsyourhearing.org.

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