

Project Title: Community-Based Kiosks for Hearing Screening and Education

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Objectives: To develop and disseminate hearing screening and education kiosks that will allow people to test their own hearing and receive information about hearing loss and hearing health services. The ultimate goal is to motivate people with hearing loss to utilize hearing healthcare services.

Rationale: The majority of people in the U.S. who would benefit from hearing healthcare services does not seek or receive such services. The rationale for this study is: providing information to participants about their own hearing and hearing healthcare services will encourage them to pursue additional evaluations and rehabilitative services.

Plan: The first year of the project (R21 grant phase) will be spent developing the hearing screening tests and education modules, then incorporating them into a self-contained kiosk. Subsequent years (2-5, funded by an R33 grant) will be spent constructing additional kiosks and installing them in Oregon, Florida, Minnesota and Ohio.

Methods: The kiosks will contain a computer-based education and hearing screening program that participants access via a touch screen monitor. The hearing test and audio portion of the education modules are delivered through headphones. Participants will have the option to print out hearing test results and additional information related to hearing loss and hearing healthcare services. Research subjects will be contacted 6 months after they used the program to determine if they pursued hearing healthcare services during that time.

Findings to Date: Initial analysis indicates there is a strong correlation between subjects' average pure tone thresholds between 1-4kHz and their score on the digits-in-noise test for both ears.

Clinical Relevance: The goal of this project is to motivate more people who have hearing loss to pursue additional evaluations and other clinical services. Ultimately, this will increase the number of people who receive treatment and rehabilitative services for hearing loss.

Relevance to VA's Mission: Some of the kiosks will be installed at VA medical centers, and some will be installed in other locations within communities. In any location, Veterans with hearing loss who utilize the program will be encouraged to pursue additional evaluations and rehabilitative services. Although hearing loss and tinnitus are the two most prevalent service-connected disabilities in the VA system, a large number of Veterans in the U.S. do not receive evaluations or treatment for hearing loss.

MESH Terms: hearing test, audiology, healthcare utilization, patient education, hearing screening