Attitudes toward Noise, Perceived Hearing Symptoms, and Reported Use of Hearing Protection among College Students: Influence of Youth Culture

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Background

• Young adults are involved in noisy activities, increasing their risk of developing noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) and other hearing symptoms.
• NIHL and other hearing symptoms are increasing in the younger population in the U.S. and abroad.

Purpose of the Study

• To assess the attitude toward noise, perceived hearing symptoms, noisy activities that were participated in, and factors associated with hearing protection use among college students
• Goal: To understand the risk factors influencing the behavior of college students related to noise exposure to effectively promote and implement hearing conservation programs for them

Methodology

• A 44-item online survey was administered to students enrolled in a personal health course (HLTH 1000) through Qualtrics.
• 2,151 college students participated (92.3% participation rate)
• Survey instrument includes:
  o Demographic items
  o Youth attitudes to noise scale (YANS)
  o Hearing symptom description (HSD)
  o Noise exposure and hearing protection use (AAH)

Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of College Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>43.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>67.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/ Latino</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 39.6% experienced at least one hearing symptom.
- ~80% were involved in at least one noisy activity.

Figure 1. Noise Attitudes by YANS Factor

Figure 2. Reported Hearing Symptoms by Gender

Figure 3. Reported Participation in Noisy Activities by Gender

Figure 4. Percentage of Participants with Hearing Symptom by Noisy Activity

Figure 5. Hearing Protection Use Among Participants in Noisy Activities

Figure 6. Hearing Protection Use by Noisy Activity and Gender

Conclusions

• Universities/colleges have important roles in protecting young adults’ hearing by:
  o Integrating hearing conservation topic in the college curriculum
  o Promoting hearing health by student health services
  o Involving student groups in NIHL awareness and prevention
  o Establishing noise level limitations for all on-campus events

Publication Source