



IFHOH JOURNAL

May 2020
v5

IFHOH President Dr. Ruth Warick
president@ifhoh.org

Journal Editor Carole Willans
journal@ifhoh.org

IFHOH Board

President, Dr. Ruth Warick (Canada)
Vice-President, Avi Blau (Israel)
Treasurer, Heikki Niemi (Finland)
General Secretary, Hanh Duong Phuong (Vietnam)
EFHOH Representative, Marcel Bobeldijk (The Netherlands)
Member at Large, Patrick Gift Egessa (Uganda)

Website: www.ifhoh.org | Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/IFHOH | Twitter: www.twitter.com/ifhoh

In This Issue

From the Editor's Desk - by Carole Willans	3
IFHOH President's Message – by Dr. Ruth P. Warick	4
IFHOH BGM Postponed to 2021	7
IFHOH Statement regarding the Coronavirus and Hard of Hearing People	8
IFHOH List of Information Sources on COVID-19	9
Invitation to Participate in Survey – COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor	11
World Health Organization News	12
EFHOH News – by Marcel Bobeldijk	14
European Disability Forum	16
In Memory of Volker Albert	16
Asian Pacific Federation of the Hard of Hearing and Deafened	17
Denmark and Life with COVID-19 – by Aïda Regel Poulsen	21
Socially Distant and Spiritually Connected – by Gael Hannan	23
Coping with Masks – by Jillian Shannon	25
Calendar of Events	27
News Bytes	31
IFHOH Sponsor – Sivantos	33
IFHOH Mission	34
IFHOH Board of Directors	35

The International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) is an international non-governmental organisation representing the interests of more than 466 million hard of hearing people worldwide.

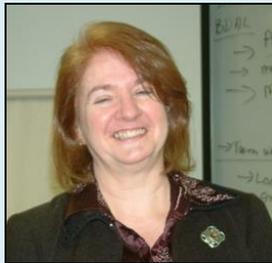
*IFHOH is registered as a charitable organisation at Vereinsregister Amtsgericht, Hamburg, Germany
- Nr. 69 VR 10 527.*

IFHOH Journal includes information about IFHOH activities, world news related to hearing loss, articles written by IFHOH members, and much more. It is published four times a year and posted on IFHOH's website, www.ifhoh.org. The Editor can be reached at journal@ifhoh.org.

All the views expressed in IFHOH Journal are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of IFHOH.

From the Editor's Desk

From the Editor's Desk



Carole Willans, Editor

Dear IFHOH friends,

It is a new world out there. Staying positive and optimistic during the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic is challenging to say the least, but it is critical to your mental well-being and immune system. Being vigilant regarding one's mood should be a priority for every person. Remaining calm and constructive can help us find a path towards our most resilient selves. The hard of hearing people that I know have tremendous resilience, acquired through years of experience with disability. You too have tremendous reserves of internal resilience! Now is the time to connect with that inner strength that I know you have.

Part of this healthy connection is directing your thoughts to maintain a positive outlook. For example, change your thinking from "I am stuck at home" to "I am staying home to save lives, including my own life and that of my loved ones," from "I am out of my routine and this is uncomfortable" to "This is a chance to find new ways to challenge myself", from "I cannot do some things I want to do" to "I am grateful for everything I can do".

It is normal to find it difficult to always keep a positive mind-set, so do not be hard on yourself when you falter. Try to "fake it 'til you make it", which means to practice and keep at it, until it gently develops into a habit over time. A strong capacity for positive and constructive thinking will always be a good tool to have!

Personally, it helps me to walk away from distressful conversations and situations. Staying informed on what is happening locally and globally is important to ensure that we are as educated and prepared as possible. At the same time, creating a healthy balance between news consumption and my daily routine is essential to a sense of normalcy.

Have faith! I am not talking about religious faith, although if you are religious and can draw from your beliefs, do so. I am talking about having faith in humanity, in the good in people, in our health care heroes, in people who work at essential services (e.g., grocers, delivery persons), in our commitment to improve ourselves and our community and to provide a good life for ourselves and our loved ones, in medical science, in not giving up until this virus is brought to heel! Believe in yourself and your endless capacity to love. Stay positive!

- Carole

IFHOH President's Message



Dr. Ruth P. Warick, IFHOH President

The COVID-19 pandemic has eclipsed all other events and changed usual norms for interactions and communications. Although restrictions are slowly being lifted in many countries, the pandemic is not yet behind us. I hope that you are keeping well, taking care of your mental and physical health, and keeping your spirits up in these difficult times. IFHOH has been impacted in significant ways by the pandemic. Our Congress, which had been scheduled for May 27-29, 2020, has been postponed, likely to next spring. This is unprecedented in IFHOH's history of holding the Congress every four years.

Our Biennial General Meeting was scheduled for May 27, 2020 and it too has been canceled. We are registered in Germany and have been working with our German contacts to come up with a plan to postpone the meeting. According to German legislation (19/18111), the Board has the authority to reschedule the BGM to next year. The existing officers have agreed to continue in office until then at which time elections will be held.

Meanwhile, IFHOH is required to file financial and activity documents with the German tax office; as a result, we will be seeking the approval of the documents by our general members through a mail-in process. This procedure is also in accordance with German legislation. Further details follow in the next article.

IFHOH has prepared a release about the pandemic which was circulated to our mailing list in March. As well, we have updated information on our website. We have also been taking active part in the advocacy work related to the pandemic of the International Disability Alliance. We are concerned about the impact of the pandemic on the health and well-being of persons who are hard of hearing. We are hearing that there are challenges with getting hearing aid batteries and hearing services in some developing countries. We are also concerned that masks impact our ability to receive information and communicate with others; clear face shields and opaque masks are alternatives that provide protection and do not interfere with communication.

Our advocacy has involved writing to the Director General of the World Health Organization to request that their regular briefings about COVID-19 be captioned. We wrote in March and, as of two weeks ago, the briefings have been captioned. In another case, board members of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People were accepted as presenters at a conference and were denied captioning as explained by their President in this issue. We hope that advocacy efforts will result in a positive outcome here as well.

Our advocacy work also continues with respect to the provision of cochlear implants. Estimates are that 1 in 20 adults who could benefit from cochlear implants do not have them. We are part of an initiative to ramp up attention in this area and to advocate for the continuation and increase in public funding for cochlear implant surgery and rehabilitation. Given the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, it will be more important than ever to ensure for CI health care.



**Cochlear Implant Consultative Meeting on December 6, 2019
when in-person meetings were possible!**

We are also part of the International Hearing Access Committee focused on promoting technical access and hearing loops. The Committee has been meeting electronically for over a year and, unfortunately, its face-to-face meeting in Budapest on May 30 has had to be postponed.

Our Inclusive Education team is hard at work finalizing the project report, which is the outcome of a nine-month needs assessment project to understand the factors contributing to, and the barriers to, inclusive education for hard of hearing learners. The

project resulted in interviews with 82 respondents in two school districts, one in Uganda and, the other one, in Nepal.



Education Inclusive Project Team at a project meeting in Budapest (February 2020)
L. to r.: Patrick Gift Egessa, Brender Wanyana, Ruth Warick, Neeta Kashary,
Karina Chupina and Jeevan Bhattarai

We are also very actively involved in the WHO World Hearing Forum and in work related to the World Report on Hearing which was initially to be launched in May 2020 but has been postponed to a more opportune, undetermined release date. The report is one of the action items arising out of Resolution 70.13 of the WHO World Assembly. These are important advocacy tools for our community to advance hearing health care. IFHOH will continue to actively represent your interests in these initiatives.



In closing, I wish to remind you to keep well and safe, and I look forward to getting together in person at the next IFHOH Congress on the other side of this pandemic.

With warm regards,

Ruth Warick
President, IFHOH
president@ifhoh.org



IFHOH BGM Postponed to 2021

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the IFHOH International Congress in Budapest originally scheduled for May 27-29, 2020 has been postponed to the spring of 2021. The IFHOH Biennial General Meeting of May 27, 2020 has also been impacted and has now been rescheduled to next year. The current board members will have their terms of office extended until elections in 2021. This way of proceeding is in accordance with new legal guidelines in the German Civil Code (Document 19/18111 passed by the German Parliament on March 24, 2020). IFHOH is registered in Germany and has consulted extensively with German authorities.

Meanwhile, IFHOH will need to file its audited financial statements, its financial report, and an activity report for 2018-2019 with the German tax office. A process for general members of IFHOH to vote on the documents by e-mail has been developed with a deadline of June 4 for conclusion of the vote on the process and of June 24 for voting on the documents. The documents are posted on the Members' Only section of the IFHOH website. In accordance with IFHOH's constitution, only general members have eligibility for voting, if their fees are paid up.

We appreciate that this way of proceeding is unprecedented because of these unusual times and thank you for your patience and cooperation. We look forward to a Biennial Meeting in 2021 in Budapest.

If you have comments or questions, please email them to us at info@ifhoh.org.

Please keep well and safe.

Kindest regards,

Ruth Warick, President, IFHOH and Hanh Duong Phuong, General Secretary, IFHOH
Info@ifhoh.org

Statement regarding the Coronavirus and Hard of Hearing People

On March 23, 2020, IFHOH, EFHOH and APFHD jointly released the following **STATEMENT REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE:**

During this coronavirus pandemic, it is important that public service providers be reminded of the accessibility needs of hard of hearing persons. We comprise one of the largest categories of persons with disabilities in the world with over 466 million persons having a disabling hearing loss. As well, we include among the most vulnerable persons to severe impacts from coronavirus (COVID-19), as many older adults have a hearing loss in addition to having other disabilities. The nature of our disability encourages close proximity to hear others. We face challenges with increased social distancing and the use of face masks which impedes lip reading; however, we recognize the importance of these measures for the safety of all.

We recommend that persons communicating with us speak clearly and at a reasonable rate. Ideally, electronic devices such as assistive technology would be used as such devices amplify sound. Alternatives are use of texting on cell phones or writing on paper. In addition, we urge that:

- Information from the media and social media sources be captioned. Many hard of hearing persons require captions to access essential information given fast-changing developments related to the coronavirus.
- Sign language interpreting of media messages be provided given that many deaf persons and some hard of hearing persons rely on this means of communication.
- And where personal interaction is not possible, we urge providers to offer the option of text messaging versus verbal telephone contact, use of a relay service for hard of hearing persons, or use of video communications with the captioning feature enabled; a link to one such method is:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=32&v=EhYdpcaxkIM&feature=emb_logo

We offer the following advice to our community

- Postpone or cancel association meetings if you have not already done so.
- Be sure to have on hand a supply of hearing aid batteries sufficient for a month or more; order by phone or on-line rather than in person.
- If unwell, reschedule appointments with a hearing aid provider.
- Take your assistive listening device with you to communicate with others which will help to increase social distance and reduces reliance on lipreading. Remember to disinfect the device before and after sharing with others.
- Request verbal content be repeated, typed on a cell phone or written down if you do not understand the person.

For more information and resources please go to the IFHOH website: <https://www.ifhoh.org/corona-virus>

We welcome your thoughts and further comments to collectively learn how best to promote and ensure accessibility for hard of hearing persons during a health crisis.

Dr. Ruth Warick, President, International Federation of Hard of Hearing People

info@ifhoh.org; www.ifhoh.org; www.facebook.com/groups/IFHOH www.twitter.com/IFHOH



Information Sources on COVID-19

www.ifhoh.org

WHO information:

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)
- [Rolling updates on coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Link to receive messages from the WHO Health Alert on WhatsApp](#)
- [Disability considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Other sources:

- [IDA - COVID 19 and the disability movement.](#)
- [EDF - Activities of our members \(in Europe\)](#)
- [CDC main page on the Coronavirus \(COVID 19\)](#)
- [CDC Key Facts on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

Info about popular video conferencing software:

- [PC magazine compare the best video conferencing software.](#)
- [Link to Zoom Website.](#)
- [Link to Zoom video tutorials.](#)
 - Everyone can open an account in Zoom.
 - To join a meeting, you do not need an account. To start meetings, you need one.
 - There are free accounts and paid for accounts.
 - With three or more participants, free accounts are limited to 40 minutes meetings. You can start a new meeting after 40 minutes.
 - There are no built-in real time automatic captions. But you can connect the audio output of the Zoom to an app like "Live Transcribe" for personal real time automatic captions, or even put the smartphone with the captions against one of the meeting participants camera to have all the participants see the automatic captions.
 - Remote human real time captions are possible.
 - It is possible to record the audio of the Zoom meeting.
 - It is possible to have automatic captions of the recorded Audio after the meeting.

Videos

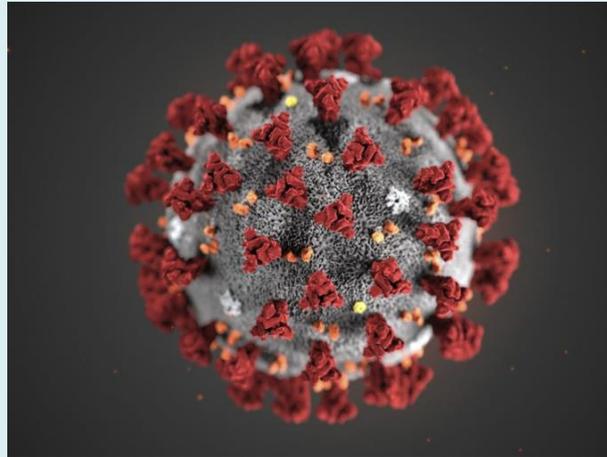
- [The Science Behind the Coronavirus.](#)
- [When you cannot lip read because of a mask on the face - try automatic captions.](#)

This video is in Hebrew. You can change the captions to your language, but the general idea can be understood anyway.

Articles

- [Lip reading in masks](#)

COVID-19 Advocacy for the Disability Community



IFHOH is an active member of the joint committee of the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium related to COVID19 challenges for the disability community. We are ensuring that hard of hearing voices are reflected in key messages. The following is a summary of an Accessibility campaign

The Issue

Persons with disabilities are unable to access vital information about COVID-19 on equal basis with others. Daily briefings by World health Organization, and the United Nations (such as those delivered by the Secretary-General) are not accessible. **Captioning**, International Sign interpretation, written or audio description of graphs and videos, and documentation in plain language (easy-to-read) are not included in the daily briefings by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations.

The Aim

To make the WHO and United Nations daily briefings and any supporting documents on COVID-19 fully accessible to persons with disabilities. We want them to set an example and show leadership to national governments and other actors in providing a fully accessible COVID-19 response by making all information that they disseminate fully accessible to persons with disabilities, keeping in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 7 and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. This includes captioning.

For more information please go to
<http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/accessibility-campaign>

Invitation to Participate in Survey: COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor

The world is facing enormous challenges nowadays caused by COVID-19. To support the global understanding of consequences of these challenges, Validity Foundation, the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), the International Disability Alliance (IDA), Disability Rights International (DRI), the Disability Rights Unit at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) are launching a survey to highlight issues faced by persons with disabilities in the midst of COVID19. This initiative seeks to gather information on:

- the experiences of persons with disabilities
- how States are responding to states of emergency situations in relation to this specific population.

To complete the survey, which is available in multiple languages, visit:
<https://covid-drm.org>

VALIDITY

Validity
Foundation



Disability Rights
International



European Network
on Independent Living



Disability Rights Unit, Centre for Human
Rights University of Pretoria



International
Disability
Alliance

International
Disability
Alliance

IDDC

International Disability and Development
Consortium

The world is facing enormous challenges nowadays caused by COVID-19. To support the global understanding of consequences of these challenges, Validity Foundation, the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), the International Disability Alliance (IDA), Disability Rights International (DRI), the Disability Rights Unit at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) are launching a survey to highlight issues faced by persons with disabilities in the midst of COVID19. This initiative seeks to gather information on: i) the experiences of persons with disabilities and ii) how States are responding to states of emergency situations in relation to this specific population. **To complete the survey, which is available in multiple languages, please visit: <https://covid-drm.org/>**

World Health Organization News



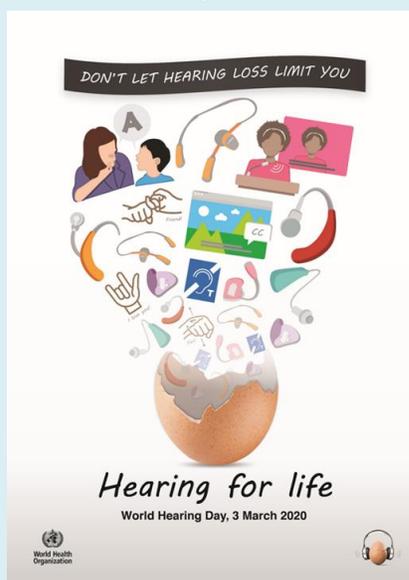
The launch of the World Report on Hearing planned for May 17, 2020 will be postponed due to the ongoing pandemic. The revised date is still under discussion and the World Health Organization (WHO) will communicate it at the earliest.

The [Basic ear and hearing care resource](#), launched last March 3 during World Hearing Day 2020, focuses on community involvement and raising awareness, and will provide useful information for preventing and addressing ear diseases and hearing loss.

Recently released, the [WHO ear and hearing survey handbook](#) aims to enable countries to gather data by planning and implementing population-based epidemiological surveys. The handbook can facilitate the planning and conduct of prevalence surveys for hearing loss.

The hearWHO pro app (<https://www.who.int/health-topics/hearing-loss/hearwho>) is an easy-to-use application to check hearing that can be used by health workers to check the hearing of people in their communities. The app allows health workers to check in and record people's hearing scores. It has already been downloaded 150,000 times in 191 countries.

The annual WHO-ITU Make Listening Safe consultation meeting was held on February 17-19, 2020 with the objective to progress the agenda on different areas of work within the initiative. Participants included experts in audiology, public health, sound engineering, sound system and earplug manufacturers, youth groups, consumer organizations, musicians and venue managers.



World Hearing Day 2020 (www.who.int/world-hearing-day) was a huge success thanks to the actions of all of you, engaging and raising awareness on ear and hearing care. This day gave us a unique opportunity to have a bigger impact by uniting our efforts, 575 events/activities from 107 countries were registered, almost doubling last year's activities! We are in the process of developing the World Hearing Day 2020 report of activities. We thank you all who have submitted their WHD 2020 report.

In collaboration with the Coalition for Global Hearing Health, 20 organizations were awarded Small Grant to support their activities during World Hearing Day. On the following page, you will find one example of a report presented to WHO on activities held on World Hearing Day.

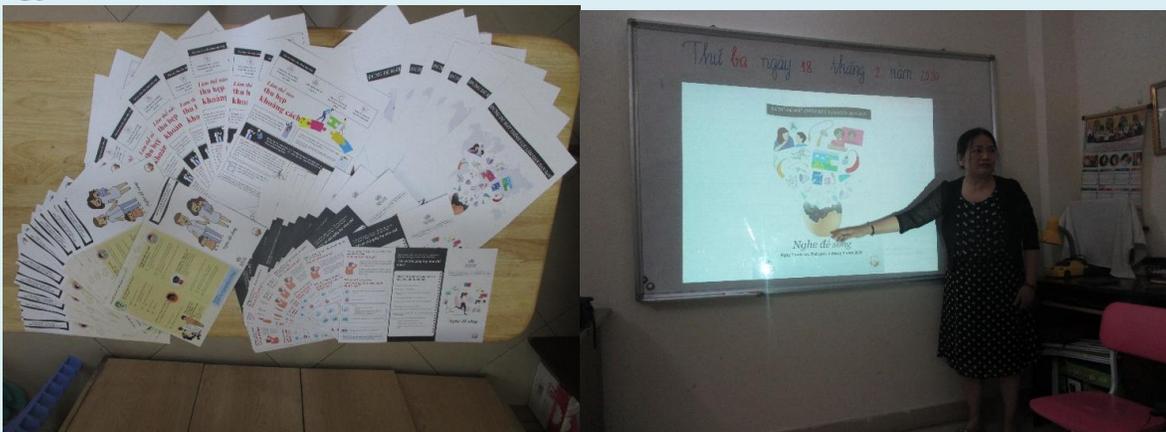
REPORT: ACTIVITIES ON WORLD HEARING DAY (WHD) - MARCH 3, 2020 - BY THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (CED) IN VIETNAM

Recently, the Center for Research and Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CED) registered with the World Hearing Day (WHO) to participate in the program "World Hearing Day" (WHD). CED carried out the following activities:

1. Translating WHO flyers on guidelines and recommendations for people with hearing loss, parents and policy makers.
2. Printing 1,000 flyers including 300 sets for people with hearing loss; 600 for parents and 100 for policy makers.
3. Distributing flyers for students with hearing loss, students of special education faculty, teachers and INGOs, NGOs and governmental agents, etc.
4. Spreading and communicating the WHD of March 3, 2020 on CED website www.ced.org.vn and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CED.Thegioikhiemthinh/>. The communication contents were articles regarding this day such as "Listen to live: Don't let hearing loss limit you"; "Why is World Hearing Day - 3rd March 2020?"; "What are the key messages for this day?"; as well as guidelines and recommendations for each audience (people with hearing loss, parents and policy makers)
5. Sharing articles and translated materials/flyers of WHD with organizations/Facebook such as: Special Education Faculty; Hearing Loss Association, Inclusive Education, Association for Inclusive Support for People with hearing loss, NPO Forum, Community Development - Social Work Forum, Employment of People with Disabilities, Ho Chi Minh City Deaf Association, The Voice of Vietnamese People with Disabilities.
6. Communicating the WHD to small groups of parents, people with hearing loss and students of special education.
7. Making an online survey that 214 participants, including 73 males and 141 females, filled out the form. 17.76% of them are people with hearing loss; 67.76% parents, 4.20% policy makers and 10.28% students at universities and high schools. The age of the most respondents is from 20 - 29 years old, accounted for 50.83%.

CED is willing to share WHO flyers in Vietnamese versions to organizations or individuals concern, please contact info@trungtamkhiemthinh.org or dphanh@trungtamkhiemthinh.org

Sincerely,
CED News





EFHOH News



By Marcel Bobeldijk, EFHOH President

EFHOH and its members have been working hard to protect the rights of hard of hearing persons during the COVID-19 crisis. There are so many concerns about the situation in Europe for the many persons with hearing loss during this difficult time. Along with the European Disability Forum (EDF), we have been calling upon EU leaders to plan for a fully inclusive COVID-19 response, as well as for an eventual recovery which would lead to a more inclusive Europe in the future. For more information, please read this link to the EDF letter to presidents of 8 EU bodies on the issue of COVID-19 economic recovery planning: <https://www.efhoh.org/letter-to-presidents-of-8-eu-bodies-covid-19-economic-recovery-planning/>.

As you know, EFHOH is a partner in the Live Text Access (LTA) European Project, which involves the training of "real-time intralingual respeakers and velotypists. (For more information, see the LiveTextAccess website: <http://ltaproject.eu>.) I particularly want to invite you to view four new videos made for the LTA Project at the last EDF event in Brussels. It includes one with IFHOH President, Dr. Ruth Warick. View all the videos here: <https://www.efhoh.org/livetextaccess-lta-project-interviews-with-marcel-bobeldijk/>.

In the context of World Hearing Day, a 2-hour Lunch Debate took place in the European Parliament in Brussels on March 4, 2020 on the theme of *Hearing for Life - Don't Let hearing Loss Limit You*. It was hosted by MEP Maria Spyraiki (Greece, EPP) and co-hosted by MEP Alex Agius Saliba (Malta, S&D). This event was a joint effort by EFHOH, the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), and the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA).



EFHOH has sent a letter of protest to the organizers of the conference *HeAL - Hearing across the Life Span*, which aims to be one of the leading international conferences on topics around audiology, including themes ranging from early diagnosis in children to life for adults with hearing loss. EFHOH Secretary, Ms Aida Regel Poulsen, submitted an abstract to speak at the conference, as did partners from the ERASMUS+ Project LiveTextAccess (www.ltaproject.eu). On February 7, 2020, an e-mail from Dr. Ferdinando Grandori stated that “the HeAL Conference is not able to cope with persons with special needs and therefore there shall be no Speech To Text (STT) nor Sign Language (SL) interpretation”. EFHOH considers this to be unacceptable discrimination and has written a letter of protest, which you can read here: <https://www.efhoh.org/efhoh-letter-of-protest-heal-conference-2020/>.



EFHOH representatives in front of European Parliament

For more information about EFHOH-related issues, please consult the latest issue of the EFHOH newsletter at: <https://www.efhoh.org/efhoh-newsletter-issue-no-2-march-2020/>.

As part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Disability Forum (EDF) launched an important and useful toolkit on accessible communication services. Please read more about it in the next article in this issue entitled “European Disability Forum”.

In closing, I want to express my sadness in learning of the passing of Volker Albert on April 27 at the age of 79. Volker was a good EFHOH friend and a great tinnitus expert, and he will be sorely missed by all of us at EFHOH.

European Disability Forum



Availability and affordability of accessible communications services has probably never been as crucial.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that lack of accessible communications services means that many persons with disabilities are not able to connect with others which can lead to poor mental health due to isolation and loneliness. Lack of accessible emergency communications is especially alarming as it puts the lives of many persons with disabilities at great risk.

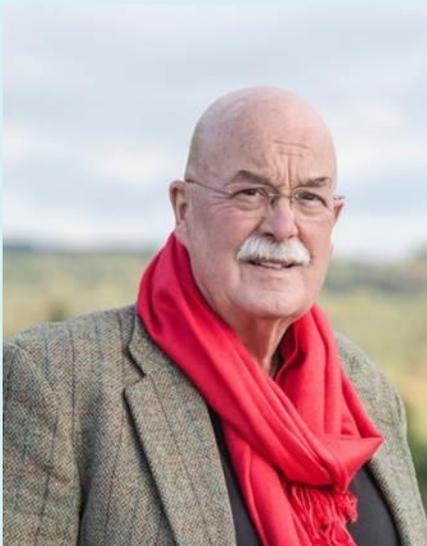
The European Disability Forum recently launched a toolkit for transposition for the European Electronic Communications Code. This document will help advocate for strong national rules to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access and choice to good quality, affordable, publicly available electronic communication services, including telephony and internet access services. Importantly, this toolkit will help advocate for accessibility of the single European emergency number '112', and national emergency numbers.

To find out more, visit EDF @ <https://bit.ly/2W2EVbh>

To download the toolkit, please click [here](#).

For more on the EDF: www.edf-feph.org To contact the EDF: info@edf-feph.org

In Memory of Volker Albert



We are very sad to inform you that our dear friend Volker Albert from Deutsche Tinnitus-Liga e. V. has recently passed away.

Volker worked tirelessly on issues pertaining to hearing loss and tinnitus. He worked closely with EFHOH on many projects including the TIN-ACT project. Many may know him from the Tinnitus Workshop that he hosted with Marcel Bobeldijk last year at the EFHOH AGM and Conference in Zagreb.

He will be sorely missed.

You can view the obituary (in German) [here](#).

Asia Pacific Federation of the Hard of Hearing and Deafened



The Asia Pacific Federation of the Hard of Hearing and Deafened (APFHD) is a regional member of IFHOH. The current members of the APFHD are: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam.



Raphael D. Torralba

Raphael D. Torralba is employed as a Foreign Service Staff Employee III, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines. As a volunteer, he is also: Vice President, Asia Pacific Federation of Hard of Hearing and Deafened Persons (APFHD); Chairman and Founder, Hard of Hearing Group Philippines; and Member, ASEAN Disability Forum - Philippines.

He reached out to members of the **Hard of Hearing Group Philippines** and reports (below) on how they are experiencing the COVID-19 crisis.

"1. What is the impact of COVID19 to you? Your family? Your community?"

- HOH Person
 - Their daily life is affected and changed due to the enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).
 - Lip reading is difficult due to face masks being worn by every individual. Face masks are now required for every person going outside. This results in isolation of HOH persons.

- Social distancing sometimes makes it difficult for HOH person wearing hearing aid in communication.
 - Unable to consult doctors due to closure of clinics. Going to hospital as an option has scared HOH persons due to the threat of COVID-19 inside the hospitals.
 - Travel and leisure plans have been affected.
 - Projects and activities of HOH groups (HOHGP) is affected as the government bans all mass gatherings.
 - HOH persons rarely go outside to prevent being infected and to follow the ECQ being imposed.
 - HOH persons keep themselves busy by watching movies, doing hobbies, doing work-from-home settings, etc.
 - Work-from-home sometimes is a bit difficult due to lip reading in video calls.
 - Online classes are a bit difficult for HOH persons. Extending school term is a bit stressful on how they can cope up with the school calendar, grades and finals.
 - Some HOH persons have lost their job or are not earning at all due to the "no work, no pay" rule.
 - Freedom was compromised because of disability.
 - No access to online mental health counseling. Everything was a phone call.
 - Anxiety and stress.
 - Crippled savings due to no income. There is no guarantee when it will last if the lockdown extends.
- Family
 - Family's way of earning money is affected.
 - Only one member of the family is issued a quarantine pass. This is used by a representative to go outside and buy basic necessities.
 - The families received relief goods and financial assistance provided by the government. However, some families were not given financial assistance because they did not fall on the qualifications provided by the government. For example, a person with disability is qualified to get financial assistance. However, those who have a job will not get assistance.
 - The pandemic has upended the lives of children and their families as health systems buckle, borders close, and schools and businesses shutter.
 - The chores of a HOH person doubled.
 - For overseas HOH workers whose work is affected, they cannot call their families back home due to the high cost of long-distance calls.
- Community
 - Philippines' government imposed preventive measures through ECQ in the whole province of Luzon, with Metro Manila as heavily affected.

- Queuing in supermarkets, wet markets, banks, etc. takes time due to the limited number of persons allowed inside premises.
- Sometimes supermarkets run out of stocks.
- Some people turn into panic-buying which results in hoarding some supplies.
- Social distancing is being observed in the community.
- Restaurants are closed and only offer delivery of food.
- Curfew hours are being implemented.
- No public transportation available
- Spread of misinformation - fueling discrimination and stigma

2. What are the tips or best practices that are specifically relevant to hard of hearing people like you?

- Following government instructions and announcements.
- Frequent washing of hands and observing proper hygiene.
- Social distancing.
- Staying at home.
- Using pen and paper as a mode of communication whenever we communicate with a person wearing a face mask. If not applicable, we type the words in our cellphone.
- Availing hearing aid batteries through delivery due to closure of hearing aid centers.
- Uses email and messaging apps more often in online meetings. If a video call is used, asking help from a family member to write down the discussions or do captioning.
- Asking for a copy of minutes of meeting so that we can have a copy of the discussion.
- Design, research and manufacture equally safe and effective transparent face masks so HOH persons can still be able to lip-read.
- More and continuous HOH sensitivity training prior to disasters and pandemic.
- Staying active and healthy, and making sure to get enough sleep and rest. Eating more healthy foods than unhealthy ones (canned goods, instant noodles, etc.) when possible.
- If buying food in the market, list what you want to buy and be specific about the quantity.
- Avoid gathering information on fake news. Instead, gather information from reputable sources and government agencies.
- Government must be more sensitive to PWDs especially to HOH due to invisible disability. Society is unaware of HOH situations and hardships just to get by. For instance, society always perceives HOH have no disability at all hence, excluded from benefits derived from the government aid in this time of pandemic crisis.
- Availing of online delivery services for food, medicines, and other basic necessities.
- Availing of online consultation from doctors.
- Develop new hobbies at home, learn household chores."



Duong Phuong Hanh

APFHD President, Duong Phuong Hanh, adds the following comments on the impact of COVID-19 on **hard of hearing people in Vietnam**.

"The corona virus has spread in many cities and provinces in Vietnam. Although it is under control, people must stay at home, not work, not study, not any events these days. Social distance and masks are forced, and they are terrible for people with hearing loss - corona has not made a problem, but masks do.

There are not any announcements on corona patients with hearing loss so far but people with hearing loss are facing:

- Unemployment due to companies closed.
- Miscommunication by problem with masks.
- Inaccessibility of information and recommendations regarding COVID-19 prevention on TV or social media, without captioning/Vietnamese subtitles which makes it difficult for hard of hearing people to follow and protect themselves.
- Lack of batteries or hearing aids to buy, unrepaired hearing aids due to closure of companies.
- Online study that hard of hearing students cannot hear their teachers, take notes and they do not understand their lessons (a parent's comments).

To overcome this challenging period, hard of hearing people learn about online business, join the social network of hearing loss groups around the world to share experiences, and seek opportunities."



Denmark and Life with COVID-19

By Aida Regel Poulsen, EFHOH Secretary



Photo by Stephan Wilke, DSB

I live in Denmark. There are three hearing aid manufacturers based here, and in this country, many seem to believe that hearing loss can be cured. That is a discussion for another day!

For many years we had no sign language (SL) interpretation on the news here. Deaf people had to get their information from the Faroe Islands, where the news was SL-interpreted. The Danish Deaf Association (DDL) has fought hard to have Danish SL-interpretation of national government press conferences, and now in time for COVID-19, they have suddenly succeeded. BUT... there was no knowledge on how to use SL interpreters. For example, in the beginning there was only one, she had to move from one speaker to the other. And when there were questions, the camera would focus on the journalist asking the question, with no SL-interpretation to be seen. We have of course written about this on Facebook, and now we have two interpreters, they are in their own room with a stable camera on them. Viewers see the interpreter in a corner of the screen while watching the person who is speaking. This is of course a victory for SL-users. Not all press conferences have SL-interpretation though, notably those addressing financial topics. Maybe the politicians and organizers think that Deaf people and SL-users are not in the working force and do not have their own businesses. But I happen to know, they do.

As for the hard of hearing (HoH) population, where we still rely on orally spoken language, we have live subtitling. I know the subtitlers work very hard on this, but unfortunately, they are always behind. Typically, we get the sentence of the previous speaker when camera moves to new speaker. It takes A LOT of energy to have so many tracks active in your brain to follow information in this manner. Also, when there is mistyping, we see whole lines being deleted, and then rebuilt. This obviously means there is information that is not being typed and therefore we miss out on that.

While I really appreciate how far SL-users have come, it is very strange, when we are so many more HoH relying on the spoken language, that the technology useful for them is so far behind. And in the public, there is not the same interest in subtitling as for SL-interpretation.

So far, I have discussed access to government press conferences. But on the local channels that provide information on what is happening locally and on how to deal with the corona virus and crisis, SL-interpreters or subtitles are not always available. For the private and local channels on TV it is not an obligation to provide subtitles.

The Danish Association of Hard of Hearing are very good at sharing information on their website. But not all think of this as a way to get this kind of information; people tend to try and follow the news just like their relatives and friends.

Having said all this, Denmark is one of the countries where things have not been too hard on us. The hospitals were ready when COVID-19 was expected to peak here, but it never peaked to the extent it has in other countries. Luckily.

Not just the national government but the entire Parliament have agreed on the actions decided. The politicians are in a very close cooperation with health authorities and the police. For example, we cannot gather many people at a time (not more than 10 at a time) (this is in mid-April). But daycare and schools have opened again for the up to 12 years old's, and they are in smaller groups of course. This is to enable their parents to take up working again.

And as of April 20, hairdressers, dentists etc. can open their shops and practice again. The hospitals are now starting to do hip and knee replacement operations again. Their wards and staff are no longer reserved for COVID-19 patients. Of course, there is still a prepared medical force for these patients.

We have had public transport throughout but with restrictions on how many are allowed on a train or bus and to keep distance. And we have also been able to go out for walks etc., we have been able to do our shopping in the supermarkets all the time. We have been informed to shop only one person from each household at a time, people are very friendly, and all know to keep their distance. To my knowledge the police have had to interfere very little to keep things in order.

A very nice local example is our fisherman's shop. It allows a maximum of five customers in the shop at a time, no more. We queue up outside - also with the distance of two meters. And once one customer leaves the shop, a new one can enter. He has also redesigned the shop in a way that we enter at the main entrance but leave by the back door.

All shops have sanitizer at the entrance and exit, and we all use it. We also have sanitizer with us, in the car, in the home... everywhere. But preferably we are advised to use water and soap. We hardly see anyone with masks. That helps A LOT as HoH, of course, so we can lipread, but we have also been advised that the protection of a mask is limited. Medical staff use masks, but they also know how often to dispose of them and/or change their filters.

I am hoping this pandemic will soon reach a safer level so then we can meet at different international and national conferences again and make some more progress for the HoH population.

Socially Distant and Spiritually Connected

By Gael Hannan, Canadian writer, humorist and advocate



"Socially Distant and Spiritually Connected." I heard this attributed to Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of New York State whom I've decided will be my husband in my next life, but it doesn't matter who said it first.

They are words to accept, right now, to help us through this nightmare of a global pandemic and our necessary physical isolation from the rest of the human race.

People with hearing loss are no strangers to isolation. When conversations swirl around us, when we are not connected to speakers through assistive devices, when we don't have visuals of a speaker's words on their mouths or through captions, we are isolated. We get this.

Some of us cope better than others. Yesterday, someone texted me: "It's hard to find anything good to say about being stuck inside except that I haven't had to ask anybody to repeat themselves."

We'll take any glimmer of positivity And it helps to remember that we are all in this together. We might be physically distant, but we are spiritually connected - as well as technically connected, which works to our communication advantage.

It amazes me how the internet doesn't crash with the magnitude of people using Zoom, FaceTime, FaceBook, Skype and all those other apps that connect us visually in real time. Essentially, the entire world is on the internet at the same time, waving to their friends, sharing stories, and having virtual cocktail hours and meals together. This is a big WOW!

I empathize with those who are in sheltering by themselves in their homes. I also feel for those who have young children with them now 24/7. But I also want you to understand that there are pitfalls in being confined to barracks with just one other person,

a person who you do still need to ask to repeat him or herself; in my case, it's the fabulous Hearing Husband. You might have someone similar hiding out from the virus with you, someone who you always said there is no one you would rather be stranded on a desert island with more than them.

This is the same person who you really loved in January and most of February, but now by, at the end of March, you may be looking at them and thinking: if you breathe that way one more time, I may do violence. If you keep doing that annoying thing that I never noticed you do before but apparently you always do it and now it's driving me insane, I will have to rethink our marriage vows.

And where does it say that in the list of Covid symptoms that says that those with hearing loss will now hear perfectly, so that you are no longer required to face me when TALKING TO ME?! The Hearing Husband and I are lucky - we have spaces in our house that we can retreat to for alone-time. Our house is in the woods, with trails that we are able to get out and hike along on most days. When we meet someone on the trail, we all step off the path and give each other the required passing space.

For people with hearing loss, staying connected means using technology that has been designed to help us communicate. Our TVs and computers have captions, either done live or by ASR (automatic speech recognition). The apps allow us to read a person's lips while watching their words on the screen. Our Bluetooth devices bring the audio directly in to our hearing aids and cochlear implant sound processors. Also crucial to my mental health is the Otter ASR app on my cellphone that I can put next to the computer when playing a non-captioned video.

Do you want another way to connect let the world know you're still here, still staying healthy and still waiting for the day when we can rush out into the streets like they did at the end of WWII? At 7:00 pm (or 7:30 in some places), every night, open your window or go out on your balcony or on your driveway - and MAKE SOME NOISE. This noise is a way to demonstrate our thanks to everyone working to get us through this alive. It also shows your neighbors and the universe just who is still alive and well! Clap your hands, bang a pot, ring a bell, yell thank you and bravo to the universe. You. Will. Feel. Great. And. Grateful.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and remember, even if there's no person in your house to whom you can say pardon, you can ask someone on FaceTime, Skype, Zoom or any other app to repeat themselves. And then it will feel like the good old days.

Coping with Masks

By Jillian Shannon, Guest Blogger, Sensory Friendly Solutions, (Canada)



In my family, being deaf and hard of hearing is more common than not. Now, those with hearing impairment are experiencing new challenges brought on by the Coronavirus.

My entire life I have been taught that when speaking to others, I need to face them. That would ensure they could see my lips and be able to articulate what I was saying. I had to speak loudly so the other person would not need to guess the words I was speaking.

Many of my deaf or hard of hearing family members began to use other ways to receive conversation. For example, they would read the other person's lips. In recent years I have also developed this skill as I have found it hard to hear others and rather than asking them to speak louder, I compensate. It has become easier to decipher what they are saying by reading lips.

A new challenge for the deaf and hard of hearing

Because of the onset of the Coronavirus, it is becoming more common for individuals to wear masks. Not only for professions where they are required to, but in the public as well. Individuals working in helping professions are now being required to wear masks a large majority of the time.

In my experience, auditory or hearing is the [sense](#) most affected by this new practice.



Knowing several people who have had to adjust to this new barrier, I can say it has become much harder to understand what everyone else is saying. Although masks are being used to protect us, it is now more difficult than ever for people with hearing loss to engage in conversation or understand what is being said.

Necessity is the mother of invention

Although speaking louder and articulating seems like something we should all do, it is not a consideration that many have had for the hearing-impaired individuals in our community. With that in mind, I created this downloadable, printable sign. [Click here](#).

I Have Difficulty Hearing.

Masks make understanding each other even harder. Please:

- **Speak loudly.**
- **Speak clearly.**
- **Be patient.**

CommUnlcation takes both “U” and “I.”



My inspiration for the idea came from my aunt. She has been struggling to hear and understand others, even more so lately, and she asked for my help in solving her dilemma. She feels like a broken record, always asking others to speak louder. I wanted to do something to help not only my aunt but anyone in the deaf and hard of hearing community who might benefit from this.



In these uncertain times, if we can help each other, we *should*. Just remember, be kind, patient and most of all, be human.

Editor's Note: Article originally published April 24, 2020, at:
<https://www.sensoryfriendly.net/deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-during-covid-19/>

Calendar of Events

Calendar of Events

11th IFHOH World Congress - **Postponed!**



IFHOH World Congress 2020 was to be held in Budapest, Hungary, May 27 to 29, 2020. IFHOH and EFHOH had planned to hold their BGM/AGMs during the Congress. IFHOHYP had scheduled a town hall meeting. Due to the recent spread of the COVID-19 virus in Europe and the World, the Organizing Committee has decided to postpone the IFHOH 2020 World Congress to ensure the safety of all participants.

While the new date for the Congress is yet to be set, we would like to inform you of our intention that the program remain intact with the same sponsors, and the registrations of delegates will be automatically transferred. The Congress is expected to take place in **the spring of 2021**. We will be working on details in the weeks to come. Please check our website regularly for updates: <https://www.ifhoh2020budapest.com/>

Please note that the EFHOH AGM and the IFHOH BGM are also postponed and both organizations will get back to their members regarding new dates. For questions about the Congress matters pertaining to EFHOH send email to office@efhoh.org, and for IFHOH send email to info@ifhoh.org.

We hope that you are taking care of your health and staying safe.

Congress Organizing Committee



* * * * *

**June 29 – July 4, 2020 – 3rd Swiss Conference on Barrier-Free Communication
DELAYED and now ON-LINE**

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the conference has been rescheduled to June 29 to July 4, 2020 and will be held on-line. (It was originally scheduled to take place June 5 and 6 in Winterthau, Switzerland.) In this way, the 2020 Organizing Committee aims to actively respond to the current emergency situation, as well as to explore more innovative ways to reach out to the barrier-free communication academic and professional community worldwide.

Location: On-line

Information:

<https://www.zhaw.ch/en/linguistics/research/conference-on-barrier-free-communication/#c129805>

Contact: Susanne Johanna Jeket - barrierefrei.linguistik@zhaw.ch

Principal Project Partners:



* * * * *

**June 18 – 19, 2020 – HLAA 2020 Convention – Hearing Loss Association of America
CANCELLED! Replaced by ON-LINE EXPERIENCE!**

The HLAA2020 Convention, which was to be held in Louisiana, New Orleans, on June 18-21 has been cancelled. You can [read Executive Director Barbara Kelley's message](#) about the cancellation. An online experience is being set up in its place, under the name *Experience HLAA*.



Information: www.hearingloss.org

Contact: convention@hearingloss.org

The HLAA website promises that it will soon provide information about *Experience HLAA*, the online experience June 18 and 19 where a sampling of HLAA2020 Convention can be enjoyed from the comfort of your homes. No registration fee required, open to the world of people with hearing loss, their families, friends, hearing care providers, technology experts and anyone interested in hearing health.

- Featured Content (full schedule to be announced, check website for details).
- Research Symposium on the latest in Tinnitus Research, supported by a grant from the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health, and sponsored by Cochlear Americas. Plus, interactive session to follow with questions and answers.
- Author David Owen, *Turn Down the Volume*, will share some insights from his book.
- Technology Expo, where you can find products and services just for people with hearing loss.
- More topics to come.

* * * * *



August 9-15, 2020 - IFHOHYP Summer Camp 2020
- POSTPONED UNTIL AUGUST 2021!

Location: **Calgary, Canada**

In light of COVID-19, the CHHA - Young Adults Network Board has decided that [#Summertime2020](#) will be postponed until August 2021.
[#CHHA](#) [#YAN](#) [#IFHOHYP](#) [#HearingLoss](#) [#Summertime2020](#) [#SC2020](#)



Keep posted on IFHOHYP activities!

Website: <http://ifhohyp.org/>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ifhohyp

Twitter/Instagram: @IFHOHYP

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCp3wyOzMgdTnBnsuxrZvM8Q>.

* * * * *



**September 16-17, 2021 - XIII International Tinnitus Seminar
and the 2nd World Tinnitus Congress - **POSTPONED!****

Location: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Information: <http://wtc2020.net/preliminary-program/>

Contact: Prof. Piotr H. Skarżyński, secretariat@wtc2020.net

This event was originally planned for September 17-18, 2020, and has been postponed to next year, more precisely to September 16-17, 2021. The primary aim of this congress is to bring together experienced and up-and-coming scientists and clinicians to actively discuss the latest ideas, results and challenges. It is hoped that the event will spark new insights that will be applied in research and clinical work.

IFHOH JOURNAL – EDITOR’S NOTE

Please – we want to hear about your on-line events!

People around the world are currently holding conferences, workshops, seminars, discussion groups and other events of all kinds on-line.

Make your event special by opening it to hard of hearing persons around the world! *IFHOH Journal* readers would love to participate in your event and bring an international flavour to your event, something that might not have been considered before COVID-19. Specify the language of the event to reach out to the entire diaspora of persons around the world who speak your language!

Please send me an email providing me with details.

Photos and illustrations are appreciated. Please send pictures in jpeg format and files as rich text or word documents. Many thanks!

Carole Willans, Editor, *IFHOH Journal*, email: journal@ifhoh.org

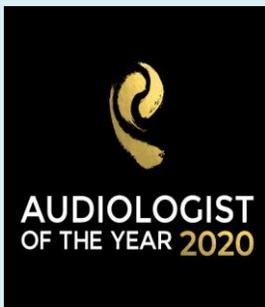
News Bytes

News Bytes

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY AND COVID-19

The American Academy of Audiology (AAA) has offered considerations for audiologists and their patients regarding COVID-19 treatments with potentially ototoxic compounds. Hydroxychloroquine, for example, was recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use to treat adults and adolescents with COVID-19. Research supporting use of these agents for treatment of COVID-19 is currently limited to a few small samples with contradictory findings. In addition, optimal dosing strategies remain unknown. The FDA has released a [fact sheet](#) to help understand the findings. Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are synthetic derivatives of quinine. Quinine and its derivatives have a long history as anti-malarial and for treatment of autoimmune disorders such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. Review the [historical commentary](#). [READ MORE.](#)

EUROPEAN AUDIOLOGIST OF THE YEAR 2020 - COMPETITION CANCELLED



The 2020 European Audiologist of the Year Award competition has been cancelled. The decision to cancel the annual award has been taken in recognition of the challenges we are all experiencing as a result of coronavirus COVID-19. Organisers RAYOVAC®, a division of Energizer Holdings, Inc., in partnership with leading international audiology industry publication Audio Infos, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) would like to reassure entrants that applications already received for the 2020 competition will be included in next year's judging process. [READ MORE.](#)

ORAL HORMONAL THERAPY RAISES RISK OF HEARING LOSS

A recent study has found that the use of oral hormonal therapy (HT) in postmenopausal women, as well as a prolonged use of oral HT, correlated with a higher risk of hearing loss. This suggests that HT increases the risk of hearing loss, and that the longer people use them, the higher the risk is. Additionally, the study found that older age at menopause was also linked with a higher risk of hearing loss. This association surprised the researchers, and the causal mechanisms behind it remain unknown. [READ MORE.](#)

NEW STUDY ON IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS ON MENTAL WELL-BEING & LIFESTYLE 2020

Clear Living, an American company, has recently launched a study on the *Impact of Hearing Loss on Mental Well-being & Lifestyle 2020*. The aim is to show the importance of healthy hearing, highlighting the negative effect hearing loss has on mental well-being and social lifestyle using statements and data from affected people. Over 3700 respondents in the U.S. were polled and gave statements of the impact hearing loss had on them personally or the effect it had on an relative/friend and their relationship.

The data highlights found that:

- 89% of participants cited social and personal problems as key impact of hearing loss
- Users submitted a range of harrowing statements from "I'm leaving him because of it" to "it has caused me depression"
- 75% of those with hearing loss had concerns with buying a hearing aid
- 58% of participant's statements say that their relationships had suffered



The report also looks at the data around the common causes of hearing test anxiety and hearing aids reluctance, the health implications of hearing loss, and tips on how to keep hearing healthy. See the full report here: <https://www.clearliving.com/hearing/hearing-loss/health-lifestyle-impact/> - Clear Living promises to update it annually.

GRADUAL HEARING LOSS LINKED TO MEMORY LOSS

Neuroscience researchers at Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany examined what happens in the brain when hearing gradually deteriorates over time. What they discovered was that key areas of the brain are reorganized, and this has a negative effect on memory. [READ MORE.](#)

LOW-COST SOLAR RECHARGEABLE HEARING AIDS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Solar Ear is a social business that provides low-cost solar rechargeable hearing solutions to underserved countries. For example, in 2019 it sold 50,000 hearing aids, 100,000 solar chargers (see photo on right) and 250,000 batteries. The batteries sell for \$1, last for three years and can be used in almost any hearing aid. Solar Ear estimates its products prevent as many as 200 million batteries from being discarded each year. [READ MORE.](#)



Help us thank our sponsors by supporting them

This issue features Sivantos,
the hearing company!



Our Mission

We invent the future of better hearing and understanding.

Our Vision

Build the leading hearing company by bringing cutting-edge innovation and customer care to all people suffering from hearing loss.

Our Guiding Principles

- Customers talk, we listen.
- Continuous improvement in all we do.
- We are honest and trustworthy with one another.
- We compete to win and create value for our stakeholders
- Quality is not an act — it's a habit.

IFHOH JOURNAL

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is June 15, 2020. **Contributions are welcome!**

The preferred length for articles is one page (400 to 500 words). Short and long articles, from 25 to 1,500 words, may also be accepted. News bytes and announcements of coming events are appreciated, including photographs and illustrations. Please send pictures in jpeg format and files as rich text or word documents. Many thanks!

Carole Willans, Editor, *IFHOH Journal*, email: journal@ifhoh.org



**MISSED AN ISSUE OF *IFHOH JOURNAL*?
LOOKING FOR AN ARTICLE THAT YOU
REMEMBER CONTAINED USEFUL INFORMATION
THAT YOU COULD USE?**

You can find past issues of *IFHOH Journal* archived at:
<https://www.ifhoh.org/journal>

FOLLOW IFHOH!

Website: www.ifhoh.org | Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/IFHOH | Twitter: www.twitter.com/ifhoh

The International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) is an international non-governmental organisation representing the interests of more than 300 million hard of hearing people worldwide. IFHOH is registered as a charitable organisation at Vereinsregister Amtsgericht Hamburg, Germany (Nr. 69 VR 10 527) and is also an International Non-Governmental Organisation having special consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). IFHOH is a member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and works closely with the UN system using the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a tool for change.



IFHOH Board

President, Dr. Ruth Warick (Canada)

Vice-President, Avi Blau (Israel)

Treasurer, Heikki Niemi (Finland)

General Secretary, Hanh Duong Phuong (Vietnam)

EFHOH Representative, Marcel Bobeldijk (The Netherlands)

Member at Large, Patrick Gift Egessa (Uganda)



IFHOH Board (from left to right): Heikki Niemi, Avi Blau, Ruth Warick, Patrick Gift Egessa, Marcel Bobeldijk and Hanh Duong Phuong (Hanh is photo-shopped in)