

Soundbite script – Understanding the link between hearing loss and dementia

Dr. Chris Workman, audiologist, OSF HealthCare

“There's enough research out there that shows some link to it. Some of that may be related to the hearing loss itself. Some of it may be related to the effects of hearing loss, which could include loneliness, depression, or lack of social interaction. There may be a direct and indirect cause to dementia, Alzheimer's, and those type of things.” (:25)

Dr. Chris Workman, audiologist, OSF HealthCare

“I've read a number of these studies over the past several years and there's some debate as to exactly what's happening or what's causing it. But I think that hearing aids can play a role in minimizing the potential for dementia occurring. Obviously, you could still have dementia without and have good hearing. You could also have dementia and have hearing aids early on and still have dementia. It's not a cure, but it can help minimize some of the factors that may lead to dementia.” (:37)

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“When we see a patient, I try to kind of screen where they're at mentally, as far as the acceptance of the idea of hearing aids and sometimes I'll recommend they wait if they're not mentally ready, because the last thing we want as people buying hearing aids and they sit in a drawer, so the key is mental acceptance. And then the second key is committing to the idea of wearing them and wearing them all day. Because if you only wear them for an hour a day, they're not providing the benefit that they need. We want to keep stimulating the auditory pathway to prevent any atrophy from occurring.” (:38)

Dr. Chris Workman, audiologist, OSF HealthCare

“When you start realizing you're withdrawing or the spouse or children recognize that they're withdrawing, then it's time to have something done. Get it checked out, find out what's going on and then address it before it continues to lead to further isolation, depression and loneliness.” (:21)