

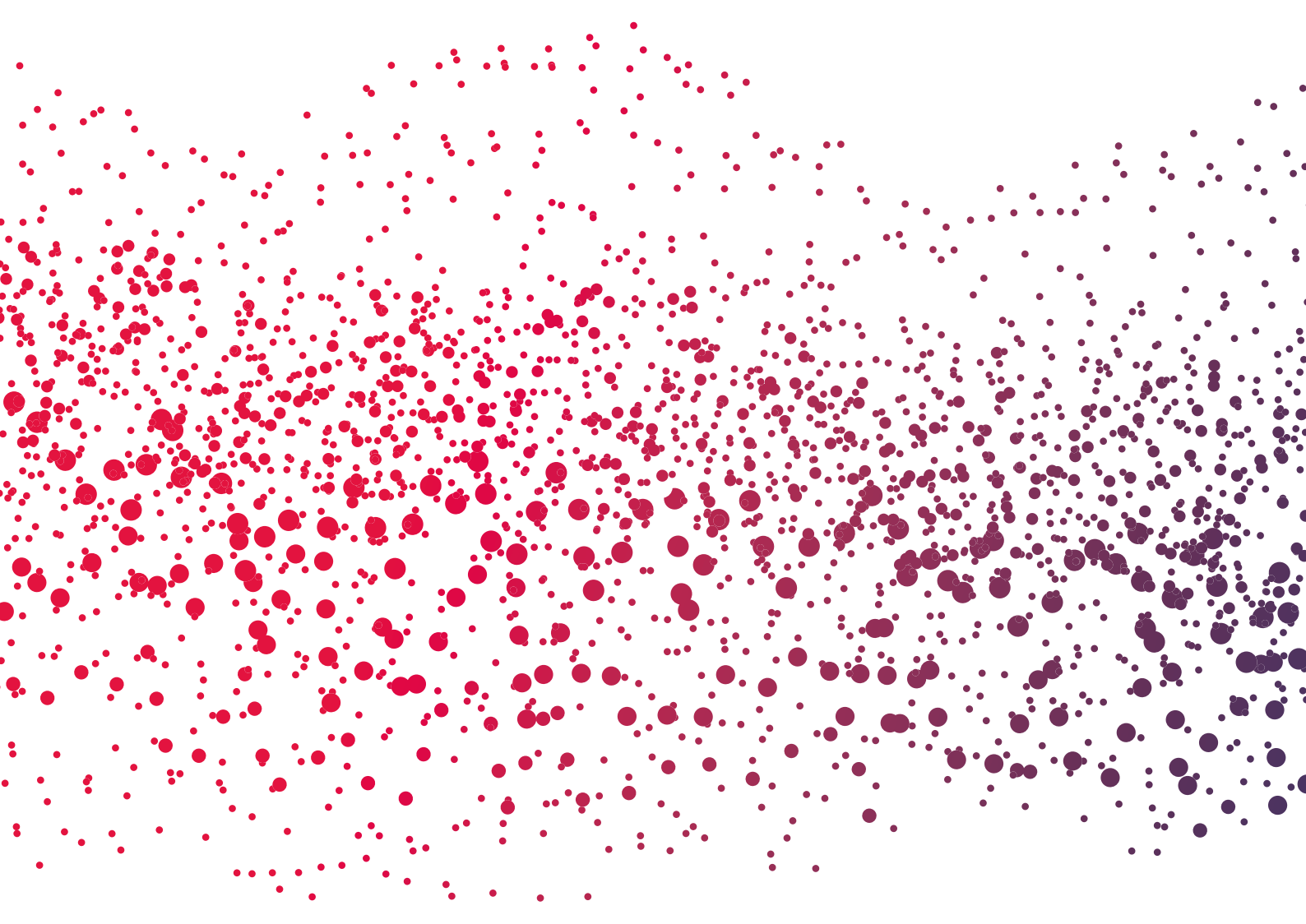


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## Otology & Audiology Article Review



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**OCTOBER 2017**

**Are Hearing aid Owners Able to Identify and Self-Report Handling difficulties?  
A Pilot Study.**



*R.J Bennett, C Meyer, M Olaithe, D Schmulian & R.H Eikelboom.*

*International Journal of Audiology, Vol 56:11, p 887-893.*

*An important part of a successful hearing aids (HA) fitting is related to the user ability to handle his/her instruments. This pilot study aim was to explore if HA owners can self-assess and report their ability to perform different tasks with their HA that are important to daily use and management. During the study, 18 HA owners age 65 to 93 years, completed a clinical history form and two nine-items surveys: the HHS-self (hearing aid handling skills self-administered) and the HHS-clin (hearing aid handling skills clinician-administered) that were developed by the researches. The surveys item list included questions about insert and remove HA, cleaning, changing battery, on/off function, volume adjustment, programs change, use with telephone and accessories. The participants, who had their current HA for 12 to 36 months, completed by themselves the HHS-self at the clinic waiting room. After that they were taken to a privet room and completed the HHS-clin that was evaluated simultaneously by three clinicians that were blind to the HHS-self results.*

*The study results showed that the HHS-self demonstrated high sensitivity when compared to the HHS-clin. 93% of the participants were able to self-identify and report their difficulties handling their HA according to the survey item list. A significant association was found between self-reported handling skills and overall HA satisfaction. It is interesting to know that many participants reported more difficulties in HHS-self (especially in more complex and non-frequent tasks like program change or use of telephone and accessories) then evaluated by the three audiologists.*

*Evaluating this article's findings must take into consideration that the sample size is small and all participants had more than 12 months experience owning HA. Nevertheless the finding indicate that the clinician should make sure that the HA owner learn to perform correctly all activities vital to successful daily use.*

**This pilot study findings emphasize the importance of equipping the patient with the skills needed to handle and use the HA correctly and continuously monitoring and evaluating the patient progress during the HA fitting. Although it is only a small pilot, it seems that developing and adopting this kind of short self-reported survey can help us identify patient difficulties during the fitting and after it, reduce frustration that can lead to HA return and increase patient satisfaction.**