

Dear Colleagues,

This issue of the *Journal of Hearing Science* is to large extent devoted to the Presbycusis Research Meeting that was held in Munich on 13–14 January 2012.

Our understanding of the biological underpinnings of presbycusis is still at an early stage. Although the majority of hearing impairments in older adults include a cochlear component – similar to that seen in many younger adults – the auditory systems of older people may be damaged in ways that are not typical of the young. Moreover, hearing involves top–down influences, including cognitive elements of attention, memory, motivation, emotion, and learning. This means that older people have a higher prevalence of both cochlear and cognitive impairments. Damage at multiple sites – peripheral and central – will contribute to differences in auditory processing that affect listening, comprehending, and communicating.

In order to design, configure, and deliver interventions suitable for older adults, we must therefore advance our understanding of how both auditory and non-auditory aspects of ageing come together to alter how a person listens, comprehends, and communicates – functions that are crucial for participating in daily life. Towards this end, the Presbycusis Research Meeting covered a broad range of topics: population characteristics; anatomy and physiology of the aged ear; evaluation methods and current treatment of older adults; cognitive contributions to hearing in older people; genetics and presbycusis; and social aspects and other health considerations. The meeting concluded with a round table on future directions in presbycusis research, with panelists Helge Rask-Andersen, Blake Wilson, Jane Opie, Christoph von Ilberg, and Marty Woldorff.

I especially recommend a paper “Hearing and psychophysics: implications for individuals with presbycusis considering cochlear implantation” by René H. Gifford and colleagues. This insightful work is followed by extended abstracts from other participants at the meeting.

I express my gratitude to Jane Opie for her help in preparing this issue of JHS.



With kind regards and greetings,

*Prof. Henryk Skarzynski, M.D., Ph.D., Dr.h.c.*