

Following the success of the 7th International Conference on Hyperacusis and Misophonia (ICHM7), held in Warsaw, Poland, from 15 to 17 September 2024 – organised by the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing, the Institute of Sensory Organs, and the Hashir International Institute – it is my pleasure to introduce this special issue of the *Journal of Hearing Science* dedicated to hyperacusis and misophonia. The aims of this special issue are threefold: first, to present the most up-to-date research on the causes, mechanisms, diagnosis, and treatment of hyperacusis and misophonia; second, to promote worldwide awareness of these conditions in order to improve the lives of those affected; and third, to provide a foundation for further scientific dialogue and collaboration among clinicians, researchers, and policymakers.



This issue brings together contributions from leading experts across medical, surgical, audiological, psychological, and neuroscientific fields, along with invaluable perspectives from individuals with lived experience. Together, these articles demonstrate the increasing maturity of research into sound intolerance disorders and highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in shaping both scientific understanding and clinical practice.

This special issue opens with a fundamental contribution by **Brian Moore**, who examines the underlying mechanisms of loudness perception and provides an updated framework for understanding loudness hyperacusis. His discussion of cochlear activity, efferent modulation, and central adaptation offers a mechanistic foundation for the disorder and clarifies how abnormal loudness growth may occur even when standard audiograms are normal. This is followed by a comprehensive review by **Richard Salvi** and colleagues, who use animal models to explore the biological bases of hyperacusis in the context of stress, salicylate exposure, and Fragile X syndrome. Their findings reinforce the role of enhanced central gain and demonstrate how translational research can illuminate underlying neural mechanisms.

Clinical and psychosocial dimensions of hyperacusis are then explored in studies from the World Hearing Center and international collaborators. **Elżbieta Gos** and colleagues assess anxiety in adults with hyperacusis and tinnitus, highlighting important gender differences in psychological correlates and predictors of distress. **Fatima Branco-Barreiro, Talita Paulino** and co-authors extend the discussion into childhood by reporting on school-aged children, identifying associations between hyperacusis and sensory sensitivities such as light and odour intolerance. Together, these studies emphasise that hyperacusis affects individuals across the lifespan and may present with diverse sensory and emotional factors.

A transitional perspective is provided by **Ali Danesh** and colleagues, who examine decreased sound tolerance in the context of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and consider how genetic or functional mechanisms may link ASD with both hyperacusis and misophonia. Building on this foundation, **Pawel and Margaret Jastreboff** present a neurophysiological model for hyperacusis and misophonia, clarifying the differences in subconscious auditory processing, central gain, and conditioned responses that make these conditions related but also clinically distinct. Their companion paper outlines diagnostic and treatment principles based on the same model, emphasising that appropriate counselling, sound therapy, and conditioning strategies must be tailored separately for hyperacusis and misophonia.

The final two papers focus on misophonia as a lived condition having complex emotional, developmental, and relational components. **Jaelline Jaffe** proposes a series of research priorities concerning the possible roots of misophonia, ranging from genetics and family factors to trauma, neural pruning, and personality traits. **Oleg Banyra** and colleagues conclude the issue with an important clinical study demonstrating that misophonia can have a significant negative impact on the quality of sexual life for both sufferers and their partners. These relational outcomes highlight the urgent need for improved diagnosis, treatment pathways, and social understanding.

The **International Conference on Hyperacusis and Misophonia (ICHM)**, which started in London in 2013, is a biennial scientific meeting designed to accelerate progress in understanding and treating sound intolerance disorders. The conference aims to advance discussion of the latest research findings regarding causes, mechanisms, diagnosis, and treatment; to facilitate the sharing of clinical experiences, case studies, and examples of effective clinical practice from around the world; to promote interdisciplinary dialogue by bringing together specialists in audiology, ENT, mental health, neuroscience, epidemiology, psychoacoustics, psychometrics, neurology, and other relevant fields; to encourage future developments and technological innovations in assessment and treatment; to increase awareness of the profound impact hyperacusis and misophonia can have on quality of life; and to support debates on how best to improve access to health, educational, and social services for those affected. Insights from previous conferences have been published in *Noise & Health* [1,2] and have helped shape the international research and clinical landscape.

Given this background, it is with great pleasure that I announce that the **8th International Conference on Hyperacusis and Misophonia (ICHM8)** will take place in **Hanover, Germany, from 14 to 16 October 2026**. We look forward to building on the momentum created by previous conferences and deepening our shared commitment to patients, research, and clinical excellence.

I hope you enjoy this special issue and that it inspires further innovation, collaboration, and progress in understanding and supporting individuals living with hyperacusis and misophonia

**Dr. Hashir Aazh**

*Founder, International Conference on Hyperacusis and Misophonia (ICHM)  
Guest Editor, Special Issue on Misophonia and Hyperacusis, Journal of Hearing Science*

#### REFERENCES

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2. Aazh H, Knipper M, Danesh AA, Cavanna AE, Andersson L, Paulin J, et al. Insights from the Third International Conference on Hyperacusis: causes, evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment. *Noise & Health* 2018; 20: 162–70.