



World Hearing Day

RAISING ALARM OVER HEARING LOSS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE: FEPEDA CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION

FEPEDA, the leading parents' organisation for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Europe, is sounding the alarm over the increasing prevalence of hearing loss among young people, particularly due to exposure to high levels of noise. The widespread use of headphones and the growing popularity of noisy world of concerts, festivals and nightclubs are identified as two primary sources contributing to permanent hearing damage. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has already warned that this issue constitutes a significant public health concern.

The Hidden Dangers of Headphones and Prolonged Listening

With the advent of smartphones and music streaming platforms, listening to music through headphones has become a daily habit for many young people. However, most are unaware of the potential risks linked to prolonged exposure at high volumes. Hearing specialists advise that volume levels should not exceed 60% of the maximum capacity, and listening sessions should be limited to no more than an hour per day. Despite these recommendations, studies indicate that many young people exceed these guidelines, placing themselves at risk of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL).

The Noisy World of concerts, festivals and nightclubs

Concerts, festivals and nightclubs are further contributing to the problem, with many young people frequently exposed to dangerous sound levels in these social settings. Noise levels in these environments can easily surpass 100 decibels, which can cause hearing damage in as little as 15 minutes of exposure. Unfortunately, the social pressures of party culture often lead young people to disregard safety measures, such as wearing earplugs.

Serious Long-Term Consequences

The long-term consequences of repeated noise exposure can be devastating. Both temporary and permanent hearing loss can severely impact communication, education, and even the mental well-being of young people. Additionally, tinnitus—persistent ringing or buzzing in the ears—can result from exposure to loud noise, causing significant discomfort and psychological distress.

Raising Awareness and Promoting Prevention

It is crucial to raise awareness among young people about the dangers of excessive noise exposure and to provide them with the necessary tools to protect their hearing. Awareness campaigns in schools and targeted initiatives within leisure venues can play a vital role in preventing hearing loss. Encouraging responsible listening habits, such as setting volume limits on audio devices, is also key to safeguarding hearing health.

A Call for Action

FEPEDA urges European and national public administrations to launch robust awareness campaigns highlighting the risks of hearing loss due to noise exposure. It is essential to educate children and young people on how to protect their hearing to preserve their auditory health for the future.

The growing threat of noise-induced hearing loss among young people cannot be ignored. By taking proactive steps today, we can ensure that future generations enjoy the gift of hearing for years to come.