

We're losing our hearing. And it's only going to get worse.

March 29 2017, by Ana Veciana-Suarez, Miami Herald

Can you hear me? Maybe not.

A Johns Hopkins study published earlier this month found that, as Americans age, more of them are expected to suffer from hearing loss. Researchers from Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore predict that 44 million - or 15 percent of U.S. adults - will have some hearing loss by 2020. That will increase to 23 percent of all adults 20 and older by 2060.

This unprecedented growth means researchers will have to discover cost-effective approaches to help patients. "In the coming decades, there will be an increased need for affordable interventions and access to hearing [healthcare services](#)," lead study author Adele Goman told HealthDay.

The rise in Americans with hearing loss will be especially pronounced among the 70 and older set. In 2020, 55 percent of all [adults](#) with hearing loss will be 70 or older. In 2060 - 67 percent.

Hearing aids can be expensive, running into thousands of dollars, and they're not covered by Medicare. Many seniors pay the full cost or find an insurance that pays part of the expense. But it's not just cost that worries [senior](#) advocates. Hearing loss affects quality of life and a person's ability and interest to engage in social situations.

Among seniors, [hearing](#) loss often leads to depression, anxiety and mental decline, according to the American Academy of Audiology.

Because [hearing loss](#) tends to be a slow and irreversible process, many don't know they are experiencing it. Specialists suggest all seniors 55 and older get tested.

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