

Media Release

The Oticon Foundation

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IS GOING TO THE GYM BAD FOR YOUR HEARING?

Work is underway to test whether regular attendance at aerobic classes can damage your hearing, as the spotlight during Deaf Awareness Week goes on the impact of music and noise on hearing.

The Oticon Foundation has awarded a Foundation grant to a research by Eyal Goel and Dr. Emily Lin of the University of Canterbury on the impact of gym noise on hearing.

More than 30 gym goers have had their hearing monitored and tested over a one month period as part of the research.

“The Oticon Foundation supports this sort of research because we believe it is very relevant, and may have very practical application to help prevent and understand the factors that may be contributing to hearing loss as we go about our daily lives,” says Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees.

Participants are healthy normal hearing adults (18-50 years old) with no history of ear disease or ear pathology. Some of them are frequent-goers to aerobics classes while others are non-frequent attendees.

“We have classified the different classes to ‘low-risk classes’ and ‘high-risk classes’ for comparison. However, it is noteworthy that in some of the gyms sampled we have experienced Hawthorne effect. In other words, instructors became aware of our research and turned the volume down,” says researcher Eyal Goel.

“We’ve also noticed very early signs of increasing awareness to the risks of noise during aerobic classes. For example, one of the five gyms included in the study provided earplugs to participants in aerobic classes. Those were available free of charge in the gym’s reception desk.”

The research results will be available later this year.

More information about the 2008 grants can be found at http://www.oticon.org.nz/pdf/Soundscape_Sep08.pdf.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in October 1976. It is a charitable trust of Oticon New Zealand Limited and aims to improve the lives of the hearing impaired in New Zealand through communication and knowledge. It is committed to finding better solutions to hearing loss and

strives to increase public awareness and understanding of hearing impairment.

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