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Message from the Editor

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Even after more than 40 years in this field, I still need to be reminded on occasion that the ears are not just those things that hold my glasses onto my head. Ears are only one small cog in the human machine and it is wrong to assume that hearing exists in a vacuum… actually that is a stupid metaphor because there would be no sound in a vacuum! EARregardless… the hearing mechanism is related to our visual processing, vibro-tactile and vagal systems, and is one very important element of our mental health.

Our lead-off cover feature article in this issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca is by audiologist Dany Pineault titled “The Bidirectional Association between Tinnitus & Mental Well-being: Clinical Implications for Audiologists”. It’s a long title but touches on some very important relationships between tinnitus and mental health. Tinnitus is the quintessential element in our bodies, where feedback loops must be considered. The more bothersome the tinnitus, the more of an effect on mental health, and similarly, the greater the issues with mental health, the more bothersome will be the tinnitus.

Relative to this, in 2009 and 2010 two articles appeared in the biology literature delineating a relationship between stress and its effect on the auditory system- specifically, stress creates higher levels of cortisol which, through an interesting series of biochemical processes, causes the creation of higher levels of glutamate (at a potentially ototoxic level) in the auditory system.

Mental health issues arise in all of us, and not just in our patients. And its not just the hearing mechanism. Stress can affect every organ and process in our bodies. As hearing healthcare professionals, we should all be cognizant of our own well-being and perhaps we can learn something from the journey of our tinnitus patients… but I border on being paternalistic. However, this is something that many of us who have been in the field for 3 or 4 decades have learned.

In that same vein, beginning in this issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca we will have a semi-regular new feature item called To the Brain and Back, written by Brandon Paul. Dr. Paul has written several articles for us over the years and is currently an assistant professor in Psychology at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) and runs the Cognitive Hearing Laboratory. This feature will appear three times a year.

From Dr. Paul’s inaugural article:

> “To the Brain and Back” is a new regular series of articles in *Canadian Audiologist* that shares the neuroscience of hearing and communication with the audiology community. This is the third edition of a series originally known as “Grand Central

> Station” by Kelly Tremblay and then “Mysteries of the Hearing Brain” by Samira Anderson. To fill the shoes of these well-respected researchers and writers is a tall order, but I am excited to continue this series's legacy. Science outreach is important to me and I look forward to sharing my time with you.
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> One of the original goals of this series was to promote bridge-building between audiologists and researchers who study hearing and the brain, a commitment to which Samira Anderson adhered and one that I intend to maintain. In her first contribution, Kelly Tremblay explained that a central train hub represented the clinician–researcher exchange:*Grand Central Station is aimed at connecting clinicians with science, acknowledging that this is sometimes a two-way return trip.*

Like previous issues of CanadianAudiologist.ca we have a number of informative and thought-provoking articles in areas where we don’t normally tread, and some, where we do tread.

And it would be remiss of me not to remind you all of the upcoming annual conference of the Canadian Academy of Audiology which will take place in Kelowna, British Columbia, in the Okanogan Valley and home of the famous cousin of the Loch Ness Monster, our own Ogopogo. This will take place between October 6 and 9, 2024.

I wish you all a pleasant spring and hope snow will soon be a thing of the past…

Marshall Chasin, AuD.,
Editor in Chief