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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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Accessibility Is Not the Same as Safety

"Accessibility is not the same as safety". This is a quote from Lorin MacDonald's "Access Points," the cover feature article in this issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca. Accessibility can take on many forms and there may be many hurdles to overcome- ranging from living in underserviced areas, to public education, to issues related to funding and cost. However, accessibility does not simply mean the provision or availability of devices, which could potentially harm Canadian consumers. In her article, Lorin discusses the issue of Over-The-Counter (OTC) products, and while these have recently been approved under a Class II Medical License by Health Canada, this in no way guarantees their functionality or safety. After all, that is why verification is so important in any hearing aid (and hearing protector) fitting. But OTC hearing devices skip the important verification step. Repeated submissions to the various Ministries of Health in Canada, pointing out potential pitfalls, have largely been ignored. And Health Canada has been even less responsive citing this issue as a Provincial concern. Submissions have been made by consumer groups, manufacturers, and professional organizations such as the Canadian Academy of Audiology. A copy of the CAA position paper (2025) on OTC hearing devices and sound-amplifying products can be found here.

And while we are discussing "politics", back in 1973, the Province of Quebec decided to restrict the provision of hearing aids to (what is now known as) hearing instrument specialists, or, in Quebec, Audioprothésistes. However, Quebec-based audiologists are still very much involved in the care of their hard-of-hearing clients and we have an insightful article from researchers at the University of Montreal on the group implementation of first-time hearing aid users in Quebec. CanadianAudiologist.ca has previously published articles on this issue, such as that by Professor Philippe Fournier, which can be found here.

Not as far back as the 1970s, but certainly in the 1980s, I frequently attended "health fairs" in community centers, being only one booth among many, covering many aspects of healthy aging. On one occasion, my booth was next to that of Diabetes Canada and I recall having discussions about the relationship between diabetes and progressive hearing loss. The representative from Diabetes Canada was adamant that there was no relationship. However, any pathology or condition that limits blood flow to organs of our body, including the cochlea, must stress or damage the relevant cells and structures. And today, we know that questions about diabetes should be included in our clients' case histories. This issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca features an article, "Diabetes and Hearing Loss: Implications for Comprehensive Audiological Care," by researchers at Western University in London, Ontario.

And while we are back in the "olden days", what is better than reading an historical article about

the development of early microphones, the audiometer, and their use in the evaluation of sound? Sound engineers Noral Steward and Walter Montano have written a most delightful article on this topic for our late-night reading.

And this issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca introduces a new regular column, coordinated by Calvin Staples, called Amplification… and it's about amplification! Amplification is actually a very broad area that can span the obvious- increased and decreased gain with hearing aids- to the less obvious- internal pre-amps in consumer level earphones, and any other device that changes the sound level of speech or music. Contributions will be considered from anyone who works in the hearing health care field. Its orientation will be translational- how does one get an innovation from the textbook to our clients' ears. For those who may be interested in contributing gems from their clinical experience please contact Calvin directly at GrandRiverAudiology@gmail.com.

This issue of CanadianAudiologist.ca has something for everyone- from current politics and technologies, to old politics and technologies, and everything in between.

I hope to see you all at the Canadian Academy of Audiology annual conference in Moncton, New Brunswick from October 14-17. More information about the conference can be found here.