

Study Links Noise to Cardiovascular Conditions

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A recently published [study](#) in the *European Heart Journal* linked exposure to traffic noise of moderate intensity levels to higher rates of hospital admissions for stroke, according to a recent [New York Times article](#). The study, which adjusted for sex, age, smoking, air pollution and socioeconomic factors, compared exposure to traffic noise for individuals in several London neighborhoods.

Results of the seven year study found those exposed to traffic noise levels greater than 60 dB were 5 to 9% more likely to be admitted to the hospital for strokes compared to individuals exposed to noise levels below 55 dB. Additionally, the researchers found that all-cause mortality was 4 percent higher for people living in noisy neighborhoods.

Chronic Medical Conditions and Hearing Health

This study is another in a long list of recent epidemiological reports linking hearing loss in adults to other chronic medical conditions.

John Bakke, MD, an internist and Senior Healthcare Consultant for [ZOLO Healthcare Solutions](#), commented, “A number of recent studies suggest that hearing loss is often a marker of important systemic illness and that it can also lead to worsening of some chronic diseases. Therefore diagnosing and treating hearing loss, even mild hearing loss, has become an issue of medical importance. Yet in addition, even for those with normal hearing, this new and well-designed study shows that what we hear is also an important determinant of health.”

Even “Safe” Exposure Levels May Cause Risk

Interestingly the study, published in a leading European medical journal, found individuals exposed to noise levels greater than 60 dB were at risk for cardiovascular problems.

Although 60 dB is not especially loud—comparable to the sound level in a moderately crowded restaurant—it suggests the cumulative effect of constant noise over years could be significant.

Dr. Bakke went on to say, “What we hear matters, and too much noise in our everyday auditory environment is detrimental to good health. Society has worked hard to assure the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe are reasonably healthy, and the cars we drive, the houses where we live, and our places of work are reasonably safe. After all that hard work, this recent study suggests that we might want to make sure that our acoustic environment is not the culprit which, in the long run, is doing us in.”