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### The nature of hearing aid problems III

In 1994, at the VAMC, a project was undertaken to systematically collect data that would accurately reflect the nature of various hearing aid problems. The impetus for this study was the fact that an inordinately long amount of time was being spent during walk-in clinics for hearing aid repairs and adjustments. In 1994, these hearing aids utilized analog technology. Hearing aid problems were grouped into three categories; patient, manufacturer and audiologist. These results were presented at the ASHA convention in Atlanta.

In 2001, a similar project was done to identify problems with the new programmable hearing aid technology. Again, problems were categorized into three distinct groups and the information was compared to the 1994 study. The types of hearing aid problems decreased across the board with the exception of cerumen related issues. The cerumen issues involved both the external canal and the hearing aid receiver, and these problems remained very similar to the 1994 study.

The current study was initiated as a result of changing technology. With the majority of current aids utilizing digital technology, it was felt that the hearing aid problems may differ in both nature and number. The current study will address both of these questions. It is our hope that the information obtained will provide the staff with insight that will help not only the walk in clinic but the hearing aid evaluation, selection and fitting clinics as well as provide feedback to the manufacturers as to the nature of the problems. This information will be used to address possible ways in which the clinics and manufacturers might better serve our veteran population. In addition, it is hoped that the information may provide management with valuable input regarding the allocation of staff and resources throughout a multi-site health care system. Hearing aid problems will be documented for a four month period beginning in September 2008. The data will be collected, analyzed and compared with data from the previous two studies (1994 & 2001). Since the previous study was conducted in 2001, the majority of hearing aids are now using digital technology. One of the goals of this study is to determine the specific needs of the digital amplification being used by our veteran population in the five clinical centers in the VAMC.