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What is the real benefit of hearing aids?

The science behind well-hearing is well-being

Hearing aids have come a long way in terms of technological development since the introduction of digital technology about 25 years ago. Modern hearing aids are intelligent systems automatically selecting optimum signal processing for a given sound scene or communication situation. To enable that functionality, they include a plethora of signal processing schemes and wireless communication systems, each aimed at providing optimum target enhancement.

However, what is the benefit of all these functions? On top of all the improvements in technology, the community has also taken the assessment of hearing aids to a new level. Today, we take a much broader perspective on the benefit of hearing aids beyond the classic dimensions of audibility and speech intelligibility. In recent years, a body of work has been developed showing how strongly hearing well contributes to improve various dimensions of healthy living and aging, especially in dimensions such as cognitive health, socio-emotional health, and physical health. In this talk, I will summarise the scientific basis on which these new perspectives are built.