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The Ingress Protection (IP) rating standard: A misleading metric for hearing aid reliability?

Hearing aids may not only improve communication in individuals with hearing loss, but also facilitate a more active lifestyle. Ensuring that hearing aids work reliably despite these active lifestyles is more critical than ever. The Ingress Protection (IP) rating standard is the key metric for evaluating the reliability of hearing aids but does not fully encompass the totality of patient behaviours, which can impact device performance and reliability. Damage from exposure to high humidity environments, sweat, and poor maintenance are not fully captured by the IP rating standard.

This presentation discusses the importance of considering patient behaviours and usage scenarios when evaluating hearing aid reliability, and potential solutions for improving device performance for active users. Changes to design, materials, and user education may be needed to address the limitations of the IP rating standard. By taking a more comprehensive approach to evaluating reliability, we can improve device performance and, ultimately, the quality of life for those who depend on them. This presentation will also provide tips and tools for professionals and patients to maximise the performance and life of their devices.