

# HEARING SCREENING IN PRIMARY CARE CLINICS



Thank you for participating in this study!

We want to thank you for participating in our study of hearing screening in primary care clinics.  
We cannot do important research like this without you!

## What was the Study?

From June 2017 to December 2020, our study team tested three ways of using primary care visits to screen adults 65-75 years old for hearing loss. Six clinics were put in one of three groups:

**Group 1:** Patients were given information on doing a telephone-based hearing screening at home.

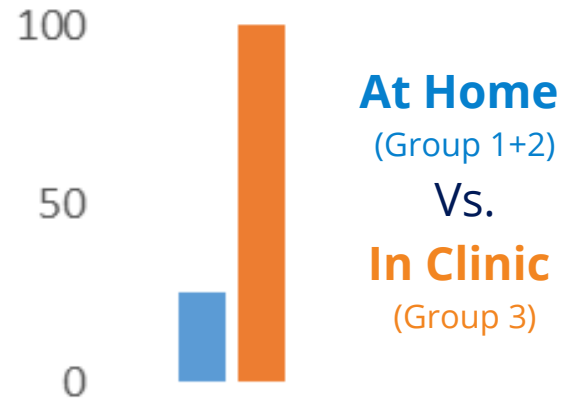
**Group 2:** Patients were given information on doing a telephone-based hearing screening at home AND their primary care provider encouraged them to do the screening.

**Group 3:** Patients were screened at the primary care clinic.

## What did we Learn?

- Everybody offered screening right at the clinic (group 3) got screened.
- Only one-quarter of the people who were asked to screen at home (groups 1 and 2) got screened – and it didn't matter if the provider encouraged them.
- Of the people screened, 2/3 needed further diagnosis; about 1/2 of them completed that. In the end, 9% of the people in the study were recommended for hearing aids. More screening and more diagnoses would have increased that number.

## Percentage of People Completing Screening



## When we talked to some of the providers, clinic staff, and patients who participated in the study, we found out that:

- Many patients had worries about their hearing that they'd never mentioned to a provider.
- Everybody likes the idea of screening for hearing loss in the clinic (like in group 3), but clinics are worried about whether they have the time, space, and staff to take this on.
- Hearing loss often doesn't feel urgent – even though it can seriously affect health and quality of life.
- The cost of screening, diagnosis, and hearing aids are a concern for clinics and patients.
- A lot of what we feel and think about hearing loss is affected by the experiences of people we know



## What Happens Next?

People have unmet needs for hearing screening and the current system is not working. There is enthusiasm for connecting screening to primary care, but we need to figure out a way that works for patients and providers! We are planning a new study to figure that out!

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If you are interested in being a member of our Community Advisory Team for the new study, please email Sherri Smith at [sherri.smith@duke.edu](mailto:sherri.smith@duke.edu) or call her at 919-613-1110.