

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Brain Shrinkage and Hearing Loss Correlation Revealed in Research Study

Columbus, Ohio – Although the brain naturally becomes smaller as humans age, findings from a new study by Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging have linked accelerated brain tissue atrophy to older individuals with at least a 25-dB hearing loss. The results of this study are congruent with those of past studies that reported marked differences in the brain structures of both humans and animals with a measurable hearing loss.

Overall, brain shrinkage was greater by an additional cubic centimeter per year in those with compromised hearing.

“We’ve known for a while now the impact that hearing loss can have on cognitive function,” says Dr. Mary Lou Luebbe-Gearhart, Au. D, owner of Luebbe Hearing Services. “We know the impact that hearing loss has on many measurable aspects of health. The good news is that people can treat their hearing loss before any serious degradation develops.”

The study was performed over 10 years, and the participants underwent yearly MRIs to track changes in brain structure. The MRIs showed shrinkage in the regions of the brain associated with processing sound and speech. This shrinkage is most likely caused by the auditory cortex being starved of stimulation when hearing loss is present. Areas of the brain that play a role in memory and sensory integration and that are involved in early stages of mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer’s disease also showed atrophy.

“Treating hearing loss before any major structural changes take place is my biggest concern as a Doctor of Audiology and hearing care specialist,” says Dr. Luebbe. “With each new study, the need for personalized, individual solutions for hearing loss is emphasized. Hearing loss doesn’t affect everyone in the same way, so it shouldn’t be treated in the same way. Seeking specialized treatment, sooner rather than later, is still the best prevention for cognitive decline.”

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**About Luebbe Hearing Services** – LHS is a full-service, independently owned audiology practice proud to be bringing better hearing to the people of Central Ohio for over 65 years. From Columbus, Circleville, and Canal Winchester in Ohio, our AudigyCertified™ hearing care practice has helped thousands of patients with their hearing, tinnitus, and balance disorders — and offers state-of-the-art diagnostic testing and expert fitting of hearing technology.