



Rock music takes toll on boomer hearing

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BUFFALO, N.Y., Feb. 26 (UPI) -- Rock music takes its toll and many baby boomers have reached the age where hearing loss has become a major health problem, a U.S. hearing expert says.

Richard Salvi, director of the University at Buffalo Center for Hearing and Deafness, says many baby boomers have already lost much of their hearing and developed tinnitus -- ringing in the ear -- due to many years of listening to loud rock music.

"Hearing aids will by necessity become a necessary part of the boomers dress code as the prevalence of age-related hearing loss begins to accelerate beyond age 65. While hearing aid technology and miniaturization have steadily advanced, restoring the hearing of our youth remains a formidable challenge," Salvi says in a statement.

"Hearing healthcare costs are skyrocketing due to noise exposure and aging. The Department of Veterans Affairs ranks hearing loss as one of its Top 5 major disabilities. In 2010, the VA paid out more than \$1 billion for tinnitus disability claims alone. The trends in the VA are a reflection of those in the general population."

Severe to profound hearing loss and tinnitus associated either with aging or noise exposure are not just hearing problems -- they can lead to social isolation, anxiety and depression contributing to an overall decline in one's general health, Salvi says.

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