**HEARING LOOPS—STUDY INDICATES GREATER UNDERSTANDING WITH A LOOP SYSTEM**

Northern Illinois University conducted a study in 2013 on speech understanding with loop systems.

The study is titled “The Effects of Hearing Loop Systems on Speech Understanding and Sound Quality in Real World Listening Environments”. The authors are: Rachel Magann Faivre, B.S., Fauzia Ismail, B.S.; and advisors were: Juliette Sterkens, Au.D., Tom Thunder, Au.D., and King Chung, Ph.D.

Dr. Sterkens has been a speaker at Chapter and HLAA events on many occasions.

It is interesting that Hearing Loop systems (“HLS”) were tested on both hearing aid users AND non-users. The summaries are as follows:

“The study recruited 26 hearing aid users and 47 non-users. Speech understanding scores and perceived sound quality with and without an HLS were tested in an auditorium. Stimuli included the Hearing in Noise Test (HINT), Music Clips, and TV Clips. Results revealed improved speech understanding in noise and reported increased benefit among all participants when using the HLS. HLS are effective systems to help individuals overcome listening in background noise, at a distance, or in reverberation. Hearing in noise is difficult for individuals with hearing loss.”

“Both hearing aid users and non-users had greater speech understanding in noise when listening through the hearing loop system. When presented with sentences in noise, television clips, and music clips in the HLS, each test group’s listening effort was reduced. They both reported more speech and music were heard when listening through the HLS, and that the sound was both more pleasant and natural. Overall sound quality for the two test groups was improved with the HLS. The majority of all participants preferred using the HLS. More than 9 of 10 hearing aid users and nearly half of non-users reported they were very likely or likely to use an HLS when one was in place.”

The advantages of a Hearing Loop System were stated to be
Methods
• Require no pick up/return of portable receiving units and headsets
• Require less portable receiving units and batteries to be purchased
• Operates on a universal frequency (1 magnetic signal for every loop)
• Are inconspicuous and HA/CI [“hearing aids”/”cochlear implants”] compatible (no need for user to purchase extra equipment)
• Work in transient situations (ie. ticket counters, airports, drive-thrus)
• No hygienic concerns
• Deliver personalized sound in the ear customized by HA/CI
• Double the functionality of HA/CI
• Increase patient satisfaction with HA/CI
• Improve ease of listening
• 99% of all participants prefer hearing through an HLS”

For all these reasons, hearing loop systems are the most likely to be the most effective assistive listening system.

For further discussion, see:

<http://www.hearingreview.com/article/consumer-perceptions-impact-inductively-looped-venues-utility-hearing-devices/>