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**Studies Link Vestibular/Balance Disorders and Dizziness to**

**Hearing Ability and Falls**

Balance Awareness Week is Sept. 17-23

**RESTON,** **Va., Sept. 5, 2023—**[The American Academy of Audiology](http://www.audiology.org/) is supporting [Balance Awareness Week](https://www.audiology.org/practice-resources/public-awareness/balance-awareness-week/), September 17 to 23. The observance has been designated by the Vestibular Disorders Association to increase awareness about balance problems. Fast and accurate diagnosis, along with effective treatment and coping strategies can greatly improve quality of life for people with balance issues.

Balance disorders, including vertigo and dizziness are also associated with a number of conditions including hearing loss, depression, anxiety, panic disorders, fainting or light-headedness, nausea and imbalance. Vestibular symptoms and dizziness are significant problems in older Americans. It is estimated that 30% of persons older than 60 years and almost 50% of those over the age of 85 years have dizziness and balance challenges.

Falls are the leading cause of injury and death in older adults. While there are many reasons why older adults are at risk of falling, hearing loss is associated with a higher risk. “Your vestibular, or balance system, and your auditory system are both housed in your inner ear. There is a known association between hearing loss and falls,” said Virginia Ramachandran, AuD, PhD, president of the American Academy of Audiology. [According to a study](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/1108740) by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, individuals with untreated mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling.

Audiologists are healthcare professionals who evaluate, treat and manage hearing loss and balance disorders in patients of all ages. Anyone with symptoms impacting their balance should see an audiologist. “Audiologists perform a battery of tests as part of the evaluation of the vestibular system,” Ramachandran explained. Depending on the findings of the exams, an audiologist may provide management options and, in some cases, may refer the patient to an otolaryngologist, neurologist or physical therapist.

“Balance Awareness Week promotes awareness and education so that consumers know where to turn when they have dizziness or balance issues,” said Ramachandran.

For more information on vestibular disorders related to balance, click [here](https://www.audiology.org/practice-resources/public-awareness/balance-awareness-week/). For more information on hearing loss or to find an audiologist, go to [www.howsyourhearing.org](http://www.howsyourhearing.org).

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**The American Academy of Audiology** is the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists. Representing the interests of audiologists and future audiologists nationwide, the Academy is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. For more information, visit [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org).