

Introduction to dementia and hearing loss

Studies have revealed that **Age-Related** hearing loss is associated with increased incidence of dementia.

Mild hearing loss = twice as likely.

Moderate hearing loss = three times as likely.

Severe hearing loss = five times as likely.

As the UK population ages, hearing loss and dementia are therefore projected to increase. Currently over **two-thirds of people over the age of 65 have hearing loss and 7.1 per cent have dementia**. It is unclear whether hearing loss is a direct cause of dementia, an indirect cause or whether hearing loss is itself an early symptom of neurodegeneration. Hearing loss can make the diagnosis and management of dementia more difficult, and vice versa. Not being able to hear or understand the test properly can affect its results.

Studies have shown that not using a **hearing aid** is associated with cognitive decline for people with hearing loss. It is also well established that hearing aids have a large beneficial effect on people's ability to take part in everyday life.

RNID Recommendations to reduce the risk of dementia

Address mid-life hearing loss - The Lancet Commission encourages taking steps to better identify and address mid-life hearing loss which may play a key role in preventing or delaying dementia in the future.

To help early diagnosis we propose -

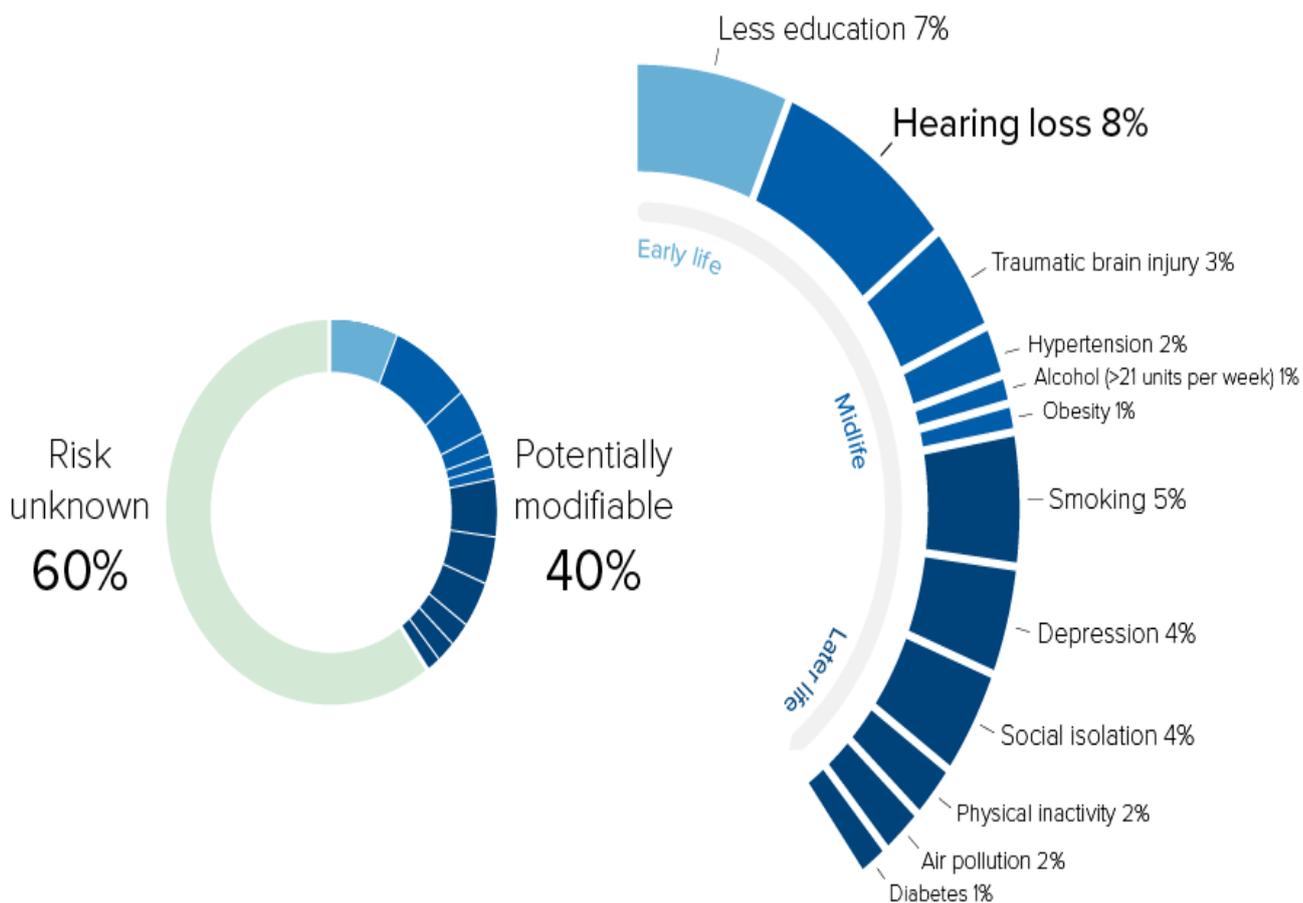
The introduction of a **hearing screening** check for people aged over 55 years as part of the NHS Health Check using two validated questions and a portable hand-held screener.

Alternatively, health and social care practitioners should **ask all patients over 55 screening questions for hearing loss** and provide timely referrals to audiology clinics. Health and social care practitioners should **provide timely referral to audiology** for all patients with dementia.

We also support the full implementation of the **2018 NICE guidelines** and research recommendations relevant to the diagnosis and management of hearing loss and dementia.

Lancet Commission recommendations to reduce the risk of dementia

The 2020 Lancet report states that modifying 12 risk factors from childhood to late life could delay or prevent 40% of dementia cases. These lifestyle factors that can be adjusted in order to reduce one's risk for developing dementia. The 12 modifiable risk factors are presented below:



For more information, please contact our national Information Line:

Call: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 900

Email: information@hearingloss.org.uk

Or Live Chat on our [website](#)

For information in BSL, you can book an appointment here: [BSL Information Line](#)

Web based research references:

1. *RNID website – Hearing Loss and dementia, how are they linked.*
2. *NICE (2018) Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management. NICE guideline [NG98].*
3. *NICE (2018) Dementia: assessment, management and support for people living with dementia and their carers [NG97].*
4. *Lancet commission report, Dementia Prevention 2020.*

Chairman: John Morgan **Chief Executive Officer:** Mark Atkinson

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