



Mountain Ear

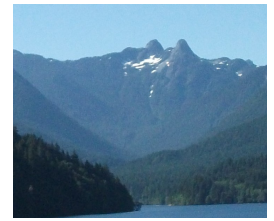
Published four times a year in March, June, September and December
by **The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch**
Address: Lonsdale East P.O. Box 54137, North Vancouver, BC, V7M 2H0
email: chhansb475@gmail.com website: <https://www.chha-nsb.com>

Tel: 604-926-5222

Charitable Registration No. 89672 3038 RR0001

Editors: Hugh Hetherington and Susan Gelinias

Issue 121 June 2023



From the Desk of the President

by Hugh Hetherington

As you read this, we are already approaching the halfway mark in the year and to me it is almost like the first half didn't happen. What is happening with time? It's not just the weeks and months, but the minutes in the day seem to zip by as well. The future is coming at us more quickly that I personally would like. I need the time just to keep caught up with everything.

In the last few issues I have included some articles that I felt contained useful information for both hearing aid and cochlear implant users. Also, for our April meeting we invited Bowen Tang the Western Canada Engagement Manager for Cochlear Canada. A summary of his presentation is included in this issue.

I would also like to draw attention to the latest special issue of the CHHA National's Listen/Écoute magazine, which features articles on their online Mentoring Program, another valuable CHHA initiative. In this issue of Mountain Ear, there is a theme running through the articles that equally relate to the subject of mentoring. Our evening meetings bring in guest speakers who are chosen to help you with learning about different hearing loss subjects which include technology, coping strategies, and ways to improve your communication skills. Our Sound Advice workshops are provided monthly to make mentoring available to you in group sessions. You get your hearing loss questions answered and also learn from others who have been there and willing to share their experiences. We also promote the "Living Successfully with Hearing Loss" course presented by Vancouver Community College (VCC) and had the instructor Lisa Dillon Edgett speak at our February meeting. I would also like to point out the advantage of becoming a CHHA National member, if you are not already. This gives you access to many

publications, webinars and conferences from CHHA networks across Canada including our branch.

Some hearing professionals still don't get the relevancy of telecoils and loop systems to hearing aid and implant users. Some still downplay it as ancient technology and has been replaced by Bluetooth. I agree that it is old technology with its beginnings in hearing aids of the late 1930s but is still very important. Today it stands out as the best and often the least expensive system providing group listening technology. It is widely used to great advantage for hearing aid wearers in Europe. While it has been around here in religious and other public venues, there is now a lot of effort being made to promote installations in both the USA and Canada. Programs like "Let's Loop America" and "Get in the Hearing Loop" promoted by CHHA National are well underway.

Having said all that, there is new technology in the process of development on the horizon. It is known as Auracast. This will change the future for hearing aid and cochlear implant users. To give our readers an advanced look into this technological change, I am including an article in this issue called "The Fly on the Wall", written and adapted for this newsletter by Rick Waters and me. Changes in technology take time. It's perhaps a decade away before Auracast's complete roll out. So, don't look to see telecoil and induction loop systems become obsolete in the near future. But, time is going by very quickly.

I have some other good news to report. We will be resuming our first Friday in-person Sound Advice sessions at West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre on Friday October 6th. This is also planned to be a hybrid meeting so we can accommodate online Zoom participants, as well.

That's all for now! *Hugh*

February Evening Zoom Meeting Recap

by Hugh Hetherington

The February 2023 evening meeting was scheduled to have Bowen Tang speak. At the last minute he was unavailable and Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, Instructor at Vancouver Community College very kindly stepped in and gave us a repeat of her presentation given in April 2021 “**Filling Your Communication Toolbox**”. This presentation was missed by a number of people and by popular demand we decided to offer it again. If you would like to read a recap of this meeting it was included in the June 2021 issue of Mountain Ear. You can find this issue by going to our website www.chha-nsb.com. You will find it under Resources, Newsletters and Magazines, Newsletter Archives, Older Archives, June 2021. You can also access it using the following link, <https://www.chha-nsb.com/wp-content/uploads/June-2021.pdf>.

April Evening Zoom Meeting Recap

by Hugh Hetherington

For our evening Zoom meeting presentation on April 17, we invited Bowen Tang, Engagement Manager for Cochlear Canada to give us a presentation on the topic, “When Hearing Aids are Not Enough”.

Bowen was diagnosed with a moderate hearing loss at the age of 2. Hearing aids worked well for Bowen until the age of 10 when he woke up one morning to find out he had lost most of his hearing. He was subsequently fitted with a cochlear implant and just recently in February fitted with a second implant. He is now a bilateral implant user.

Bowen has been very active in the hearing loss field. He has a B.Ed. degree from UBC and has been a teacher of the deaf at the Children’s Speech and Hearing Centre of BC and a teacher for the deaf and hard of hearing as a District Resource Teacher in the Burnaby School District. He was co-founder and Director of the BC Peer Support group. He has also served in many positions with the IFHOHYP (International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People) and is currently their president. He joined Cochlear Canada in 2021 as Engagement Manager for Western Canada. Cochlear’s mission is to help people hear and be heard and empower people to connect with others and live a full life. They transform

the way people understand and treat hearing loss. They innovate and bring to market a range of implantable hearing solutions that deliver a lifetime of hearing outcomes. Cochlear’s products include cochlear implants and implantable bone conduction devices for those with needs that go beyond hearing aids.

In getting to know the audience he asked a number of questions, such as, how many of you are struggling with your hearing loss, how many of you have lost all of the hearing loss in one ear?

For the night’s agenda he talked about types and degrees of hearing loss, treatments of hearing loss, different implant solutions available, and further steps to better hearing. He pointed out that with our hearing loss we are not alone. Nearly 1 out of 3 over the age of 65 are affected by hearing loss, that is about 48 million people. He demonstrated on a picture of an audiogram as to what sounds you may be missing within certain ranges of loss.

Bowen talked about sensorineural hearing loss (hair cell and nerve damage) and mentioned some of the causes, which include, congenital hearing loss, aging, exposure to loud sounds, head trauma, genetics, Ménière’s disease, and adverse reaction to medications. He pointed out that the treatment for these include, Hearing Aids, Cochlear Implants and some Hybrid Hearing Solutions.

Bowen also talked about Conductive Hearing Loss. This is when the damage is in the outer and middle ear. Common causes include malformations at birth, various syndromes, chronic mastoiditis, or middle ear infections, draining ears, chronic ear infections, previous ear surgeries, and benign tumours. Treatment options include medication, surgery, hearing aids and bone conduction solutions.

To determine what type of hearing loss you have and what treatment is appropriate it is very important to consult with a hearing specialist. Why does this matter? You want the best hearing solution for you. Are hearing aids enough?

In the Cochlear “Nucleus” system there are two main components. (1) the external sound processor. These are available in two types, Nucleus® 8 Sound Processor, and the Nucleus® Kanso® 2 Sound Processor. The first one is worn behind the ear like a hearing aid and the second one is worn on the head over the implant.

How does a cochlear implant work? It consists of two parts, an outer part, the sound processor, worn on the ear or the head, and a surgically implanted part with an electrode array. The electrode array is inserted into the cochlea during the surgery. Microphones on the sound processor pick up sounds and the processor converts them into a digital signal. This signal is transferred to the implant just under the skin. The implant sends the digital sound signal to the electrode array in the cochlea. The hearing nerve picks up the signal and sends it to the brain which is understood as sound.

In talking about outcomes, Bowen said that studies have shown that adults with implants were 5 times more satisfied with their ability to understand what is said on TV, 7 times improved in their ability to understand sentences, and 11 times more satisfied with their ability to hear on the phone than with two hearing aids.

Bone Conduction solutions are typically for individuals with conductive hearing loss, mixed hearing loss, and single sided deafness. Bone conduction solutions work by bypassing the damaged middle and outer ear and sending clearer and more crisp sound directly to the inner ear. Research and decades of experience demonstrate that a bone conduction solution may help you hear better, even in noisy situations, hear sounds as if they are coming from both sides, and engage in conversations more easily because you no longer need to keep turning to use your good ear.

Bone conduction products include the Baha® Start, a non-surgical bone conductor, the Osia® system, active OS implants, and the Baha® system bone conduction implants.

The Cochlear Osia System is a new type of bone conduction solution that uses piezoelectric stimulation to send sound naturally to the inner ear. It's made up of two parts, the external sound processor and the internal implant. It is slim and discrete and has five colour options. It also has an LED light to confirm that the sound processor is on and connected.

All of Cochlear's systems can be conveniently controlled with smart apps. With the apps you can easily, change programs or volume, check battery life, get help finding your sound processor if you misplace it, and start wireless streaming.

Cochlear's True Wireless accessories are compatible

with the Nucleus 8, Kanso 2, Osia 2 and Baha 6 Max Sound Processors. These are optional accessories that connect seamlessly to your lifestyle and enhance your hearing experience in challenging situations like talking on the phone or watching TV. They are great for noisy environments like restaurants or church.

Several of Cochlear's sound processors have the optional Aqua+ accessory which allows you to enjoy swimming, surfing, snorkelling and more. They can be submerged up to 10 feet for 2 hours.

To see if you qualify for any of the solutions mentioned in this presentation, speak to your audiologist about getting a hearing evaluation. If qualified, you will also need a medical/surgical consultation. The implant procedure is normally a routine outpatient procedure. It is performed under general anaesthesia. For cochlear implants it usually takes about 2 hours, and 1 hour for bone conduction implants. The surgery involves a small incision. In a few days, most people are back to their normal activities. This has been the established treatment option for 40 years.

Visit Cochlear's website at www.cochlear.com.

Thank you, Bowen, for an excellent and informative presentation.

The Fly on the Wall?

by Rick Waters & Hugh Hetherington

Ever wonder what they talk about at a cochlear implant support group? Well, I decided to be a "fly on the wall" and listen in on the last meeting of the Cochlear Implant Support Group, held in Vancouver on April 1st.

They had a pretty good turnout for the meeting, with about 11 folks in attendance in person, plus another 5 or 6 online.

They had six people who were newly-activated, 4 with their first implant, and 2 who were just activated with bilateral implants. It seems they've been very busy at the clinic at St. Paul's Hospital, where implants for BC and Yukon are done.

With so many newly-implanted folks, and with the number of questions about the use of the accessories, they decided to focus on what the accessories can do, and how to use them. And, with the new wireless technology Auracast, about to be implemented, they had an

opportunity to learn how we'll all be affected by this exciting new technology.

So, they started with the basic premise: When a sound is not loud enough, it is a natural human reaction to go closer to the sound. If someone is whispering, you might go close enough that they "Whisper in your ear". And that, in essence, is what the accessories generally do. The Mini Mic, a product jointly developed and distributed by Resound and Cochlear is a good example. It is small microphone and associated radio transmitter, that picks up sounds, and sends them directly to your implant and, if you wear one, a compatible hearing aid. In effect, your ear is now closer to the sound. In addition to the microphone, it has inputs for audio signals, such as an iPod, or a computer; an induction loop signal; and it has a "Euro Pin" socket, which will allow you to use an FM receiver (say a Phonak Smartlink), or a Roger system receiver. That's similar to what we can do with our hearing aids!

The TV Streamer uses the same basic "bring the sound closer to your ear" principle, and is intended to help when listening to a television program, although it can be used with any audio source to deliver sound in stereo. With Auracast, it will no longer be necessary to choose a compatible hearing aid to complement your implant, but more later. Again, this similar to what we can do with our hearing aids.

I noticed that there was a constant flood of questions, some about implants in general, some about how implants affect such activities as bicycle riding, how they work for folks who have single-sided deafness, how long the batteries last, the relative benefits of off-the-ear processors vs on-the-ear processors, and so on. Some wanted to know what voices sounded like with an implant, and others wondered what it was like to wear a hearing aid in one ear, and an implant in the other.

Then they moved on to Auracast. A new technology that will be rolled out at all sorts of venues such as airport loading gates, theatres, lecture halls, and so on. This is the latest Bluetooth implementation, and to the end user, will operate somewhat like WiFi. If the theatre has Auracast, the signal will have a name, something like a WiFi signal does now. To use, you would scan the available Auracast signals, and select the one you need, using your smartphone to make the selection. Your processor, if it is Auracast enabled, will pick up the

signal, and deliver it directly to your brain! No more awkward captioning devices at the movies, or having to go up to the gate attendant attendant at the airport to find out what that announcement was all about. Another benefit is that future hearing aids will be Auracast enabled, so it will not be necessary to choose one brand over another to go with your implant if you wear a hearing aid in one ear, and a cochlear implant in the other. At the moment, the Cochlear Nucleus 8 processor, already in use in the USA, and just waiting for Health Canada approval is Auracast ready. They didn't say, so I can't be sure if the other implant brands will offer this technology.

And now, a word or two, about the group. It was formed to meet the needs of those with implants, and those who are candidates. They use the "Peer Support" model to provide help to others. In a perfect world, the audiologists would fill these needs, but as we all know, the world is not perfect. Audiologists are busy doing evaluations, mappings, and so on. They do not have the time to offer comprehensive counselling to candidates, and they do not have time to offer all the support that those with implants may require with such things as how to hook up accessories, how to get the most out of the technology in different situations, etc. Because the overwhelming majority of implantees in British Columbia have a Cochlear Corporation implant, they tend to focus on that brand in their meetings, as that simply makes things much more relevant for their members.

They have no constitution nor any bylaws, and apparently they have no money, none at all! The membership is scattered across the province, and not all can attend the meetings. At first, they chose to rent a meeting space, and Cochlear kindly offered to fund the rental, along with the coffee and donuts! They soon discovered that those not living in the Vancouver area felt "left out", and now they have virtual attendance using Microsoft Teams, and that has solved that problem. Bowen Tang, the engagement manager for Cochlear in Western Canada does the technology set up, And they meet at the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre which allows them to use their great meeting rooms at no charge.

And finally, they are not there to promote one brand of hearing instrument over another, but simply to answer

the questions that so many candidates have as they work through the decision process, and that those who are newly-implemented have as they re-discover hearing. If you would like to be a part of this group you can contact Rick Waters by email at rwmgtc@gmail.com.

And, as the meeting wrapped up, I realized that the cochlear implant folks talk about the same things we do at our Sound Advice meetings. Who would have thought?

Sound Advice Meetings
Our version of Mentoring
by Susan Gelinias

CHHA-NSB has been holding Sound Advice meetings monthly since 2002. We are very proud of the work we have done. We are hard of hearing people helping other people with hearing loss. We listen to others with similar problems and share our solutions. Hearing loss is an emotional issue and we reach out to support those who feel separate from the real world.

The group can consist of people who are just starting to lose their hearing to those who have been wearing hearing aids for several years to those where hearing aids aren't helping anymore. It also can include people who have a family member who is dealing with hearing loss. The group is open to people of all ages. The group consists of new people looking for answers to specific questions, regulars who have their own stories to share, and people who come on a semi regular basis who want to give feedback on their progress.

Perfect hearing aids don't necessarily mean perfect hearing but we want to do as much as we can to make the world user friendly for people with hearing loss. We want to inform, advise, educate and support people dealing with hearing loss. Our in-person and our Zoom meetings are conducted in a safe, supportive manner. We feel strongly that we are part of the movement to break down barriers, & remove stigmas. And we know we have made a difference in people's lives.

Join us at a meeting to get answers to your hearing loss questions and to share your experiences. See our ad on the last page of this newsletter for dates and times.

We look forward to seeing you.

June Evening Presentation

Monday, June 19, 2023

7:00 pm via **Zoom**

Guest Speakers

Lorienne Jenstad, Ph.D,
Associate Professor, School of
Audiology & Speech Sciences at
UBC.

& members of the Breaking
Barriers research team.

Topic:

“Advocating for Hearing Health
Care Change in BC”

- Curious to learn what your doctor knows about hearing health care?
- How does BC fare in comparison to other provinces regarding hearing aid funding?
- We will discuss our research to understand primary care providers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours about hearing health.
- In addition, we will discuss ongoing efforts to increase awareness of hearing health needs for adults among both politicians and primary care providers (e.g. family doctors.)

The meeting is open to the public and there are no restrictions on the number of people who attend. The meeting is expected to last one hour: a presentation followed by questions & discussion.

For information call: 604-926-5222

To request an invitation to join this
Zoom meeting, please email:

chhansb475@gmail.com

Living Successfully with Hearing Loss

by Lisa Dillon Edgett

Living Successfully with Hearing Loss is a 12-session course that focuses on knowledge, skills, and attitudes to promote effective communication. This course is open to those with hearing loss and their communication partners.

It seems strange to be planning for the Fall when summer has not yet arrived, but the next term of this course will begin on September 12th, and registration will open soon. We will continue with online delivery of both Level 1 and Level 2 courses, with afternoon and evening options. This online course provides material through a course website, in conjunction with a weekly Zoom session with a small group to review, discuss, and practice topics such as speechreading, communication strategies, assertive behaviour, managing technology, understanding your hearing loss and explaining it to others, and so much more.

LSWHL Level 1: 2 Zoom options 90 minutes

Tuesday afternoons: 1pm (PT) from Sept. 12 to Nov. 28

Tuesday evenings: 7pm (PT) from Sept. 12 to Nov. 28

LSWHL Level 2: 2 Zoom options 90 minutes

Wed afternoons: 1pm (PT) from Sept. 13 to Nov. 29

Wed evenings: 7pm (PT) from Sept. 13 to Nov. 29

Please email me to get more information, ask questions, or reserve a spot for September. Participants learn and share tips and strategies and leave the course with a sense of community, a strong foundation for managing the challenges associated with hearing loss and communication, and the knowledge that "I am not alone.". The current cost of the course is \$293. Financial support may be available. Please contact me to find out more.

Lisa Dillon Edgett, Ph.D., RAUD, Aud(C)

ldillonedgett@vcc.ca

604-871-7348

Sound Advice

Presented by:

The Canadian Hard of Hearing
Association
North Shore Branch

When we meet, we discuss topics and issues dealing with hearing loss.

Subjects to be addressed include:

Technology;

Speech Reading;

Coping Strategies;

Improving Hearing Environments

West Vancouver Seniors' Centre

Sound Advice sessions will be held as **online Zoom** meetings on the First Friday of each month at 10:00 AM.

To receive an invitation to join the meetings, please send an email to chhansb475@gmail.com to be added to the list.

Silver Harbour sessions will be held as **in-person** meetings on the last Monday of each month at 10:00 AM.

Silver Harbour Centre is located at 144 22nd Street in North Vancouver.

There are no meetings in July & August

For Information call:

604-926-5222