

## Letters to the Editor

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### SOLVENTS AND HEARING LOSS

#### To the Editor:

The article by Mencher et al (1995) states that "There are seven groups of substances and chemicals known to affect hearing and/or the vestibular system." I would suggest at least one more category: industrial solvents such as toluene, styrene, and trichlorethylene.

There is modest but growing literature on these solvents and it is clear that they can independently cause hearing loss (of both central and peripheral origin), that they may interact synergistically with noise, and, most importantly, that there are large numbers of people exposed to solvents and noise. Unfortunately, there are no provisions in our regulations to assess the additional threat to hearing that solvents pose.

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Mencher GT, Novotny G, Mencher L, Gulliver M. (1995). Ototoxicity and irradiation: additional etiologies of hearing loss in adults. *J Am Acad Audiol* 6:351-357.

### HEARING THRESHOLDS

#### To the Editor:

The hearing threshold working group (WG1 of ISO TC/43) of International Standards Organization (ISO) is seeking threshold data for the high frequencies: 8, 9, 10, 11.2, 12.5, 14, and 16 kHz.

In order to avoid some of the problems that occurred in establishing air-conduction and bone-conduction thresholds using the conventional frequency range, this working group has developed a protocol for obtaining this data (briefly, it prefers the Sennheiser HDA 200 or Koss HV.1A earphones): one should use an IEC 318 coupler with flat plate and should have at least 25 subjects [preferably both male and female] 18 to 25 years old who are otologically normal. One should use either a bracketing or ascending threshold testing technique.

If you have data in this frequency range, or if you plan to do a study of high-frequency thresholds, please contact me by e-mail or by phone (see below) for full details of the ISO protocol. In addition to the above, there is a short questionnaire and some further details.

Unfortunately, as you know, ISO is a volunteer organization and as such has no funds to support any research, but it does encourage good and careful investigations and tries to pull data from those studies to develop new standards and to revise old ones. I am sure that all of you recognize the need for good data in the high-frequency range; so any help would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Laura Ann Wilber, Professor of Audiology and Hearing Sciences, Northwestern University, 2299 North Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208-3550; tel: (708) 491-2470; fax (708) 491-2523; e-mail: I-wilber@nwu.edu for complete details.

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