

Help-Seeking Behavior and Social Engagement Among Older Adults with Hearing Impairment

Mary Dioise Ramos, PhD(c), MAN, RN

Georgia State University Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing & Health Professions

Background

- Hearing impairment is one of the most common issues that older adults' experience. About 2% of adults aged 45 to 54 have disabling hearing impairment, and the rate increases to 8.5% for 55 to 64 years old. The incidence of hearing impairment tripled for those 65 to 74 years of age and continued to rise at approximately 50% for those 75 and older. ¹
- Despite the efforts to improve delivery of care for people with hearing impairment, and negative health outcomes experienced by hearing impaired individuals, there are estimated 15 million people in the United States with hearing impairment avoid seeking help or engage in hearing intervention. ²

Purpose

- The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that are thought to influence the help-seeking intentions and seeking professional help of older adults with hearing impairment.

Research Questions

- What factors (knowledge and attitudes about hearing impairment, stigma about hearing impairment, and self-efficacy in seeking help about hearing impairment) are associated with help-seeking intention and seeking professional help among older adults with hearing impairment?
- What is the association between social engagement and self-efficacy in seeking help among older adults with hearing impairment?

Theoretical Framework

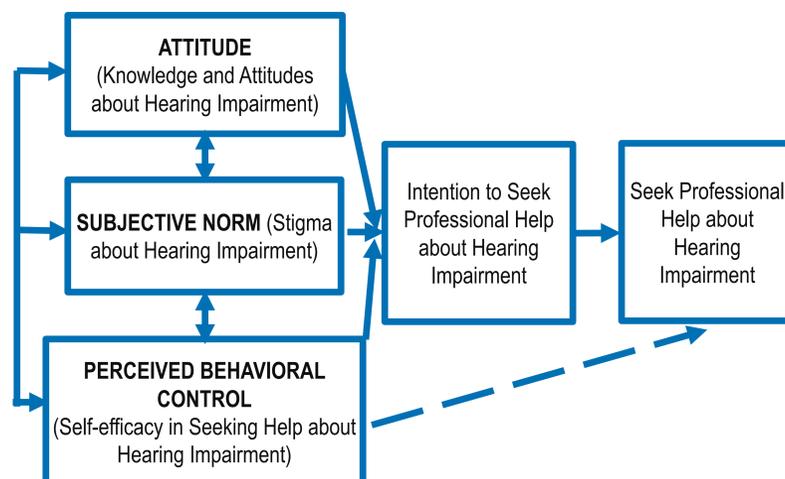


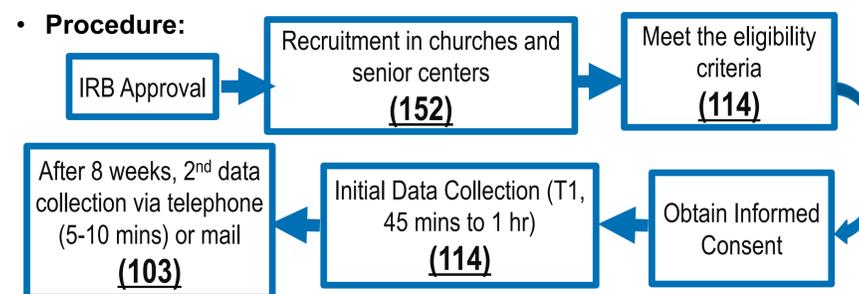
Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior Adapted for Help Seeking for Hearing Impairment in Older Adults: Ajzen, 1985

Methods

- Design:** Prospective Correlational Design
- Setting:** Participants were recruited in different sites such as churches and senior centers located in Cobb county, GA.
- Sample:** age 60 years old and above, able to read and write English, have a moderate handicap score (10-24) on the Hearing Handicap Inventory-Screening version, or have a hearing loss on the basis of more than 25 decibels (dB) hearing level (HL) using the shoebox audiometry.



Procedure:



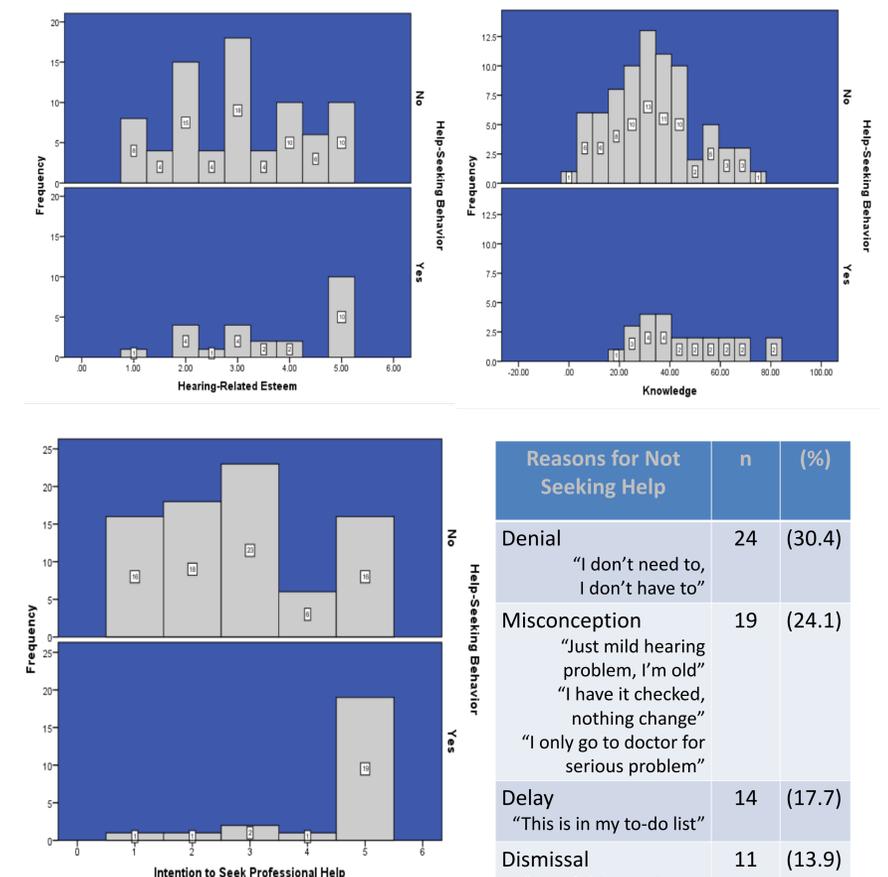
Result

	Intention	DHL	NA	NC	MD	HRE	K	HLS	PTA	SE	SoE	HSB	
Intention													
DHL		-.279**											
NA			.274**										
NC				.365**									
MD					.279**	.271**							
HRE						.035	.053						
K							.051	.047	.055	.050			
HLS								.037	.129	.137	.031	.175	
PTA									-.014	.114	-.119	.076	
SE										-.059	.044	-.108	-.400**
SoE											.134	-.294**	.217*
HSB												.467**	-.063
													-.016
													.109
													.049
													.220*
													.267**
													.129
													.044
													-.119
													.055

DHL – Denial of Hearing Loss, NA- Negative Association, NC- Negative Coping Strategies, MD- Manual Dexterity & Vision, HRE- Hearing Related Esteem, K- Knowledge, HLS- Hearing Loss Stigma, PTA- Pressure to be Assessed Stigma, SE- Self-Efficacy, SoE-Social Engagement, HSB- Help-Seeking Behavior

- Social Engagement was associated with Denial towards Hearing Loss, Negative Association towards Hearing Loss, Negative Coping Strategies towards Hearing Loss, Hearing Loss Stigma, and Self-Efficacy in Seeking Help about Hearing Loss.

Result



- Higher hearing-related esteem, higher knowledge about hearing loss, and higher intention to seek professional help were associated with help-seeking behavior of older adults with hearing impairment.

Implications

- Understanding the various factors related to why such a large proportion of hearing impaired older adults do not seek professional help or consultation is needed so that appropriate screening and assessment programs can be culturally tailored or modified accordingly to the needs of this vulnerable population.

References

- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. Quick statistics. (2016). <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/Pages/quick.aspx>.
- Center for Hearing and Communication. (2016). Statistics and facts about hearing loss. <http://chcheating.org/facts-about-hearing-loss/>.