

---

2:30 PM

**Effectiveness of School-Based Hearing Loss Prevention Programs in a Rural Area.**

Greg Flamme, Ph.D., Shelby Myers-Verhage



Dr. Flamme is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI. His research interests focus on the epidemiology, prevention, and the evaluation of rehabilitative techniques for people with mild hearing impairment.

Shelby Myers-Verhage is an instructor in the Department of English at Kirkwood Community College. She taught middle school English for 8 years, and then returned to school to earn an M.A.T. at the University of Iowa. Shelby's professional interests focus on curriculum development for public school systems.

**Abstract:** This presentation will describe the results of an evaluation of four hearing loss prevention programs, two for grade 4 and two for grade 7. Within each grade level, one basic and one comprehensive program were developed. The basic program included hearing evaluations, a brief individual consultation, and easy access to a supply of hearing protectors (grade 7 only). The comprehensive program added classroom presentations, take-home activities/ materials, and booster interventions. Participants in basic and comprehensive programs (N = 309) were compared with responses with a reference group of approximately 600 students from other school districts in which no program was administered. Outcomes, measured 9 to 12 months after the start of the intervention, included changes in hearing status, self-reported exposure frequency, knowledge, health beliefs, and intentions regarding hearing loss prevention. No significant differences in hearing sensitivity were observed across the basic and comprehensive treatment groups. At both grade levels, both treatment groups showed better outcomes (re: health beliefs and intentions) than the reference group. The comprehensive treatment showed better belief and intention outcomes than the basic treatment group in grade 7 only. We concluded that basic hearing loss prevention programs provide superior outcomes to no systematic hearing loss prevention education, and that benefits from comprehensive hearing loss prevention education were observable within the 7th grade group 9 to 12 months following the start of the intervention. Research supported by NIOSH (R21 OH07707).

---

2:50 PM

**Review and Future Recommendations of NIDCD's Public Education Efforts to Prevent NIHL in Children**

Patricia Blessing



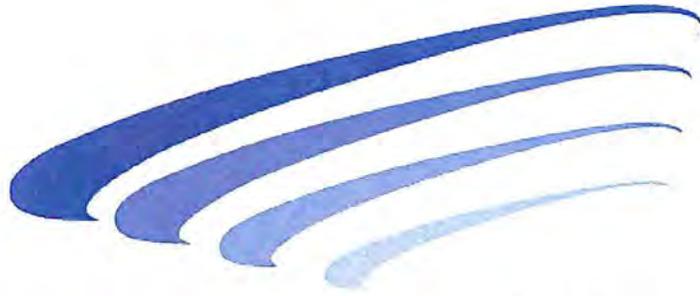
Ms Blessing is is director of NIDCD's Office of Health Communication and Public Liaison, where she plans and directs media relations, community relations, public education, and dissemination of scientific information. She received her B.S. in nutrition research in 1981 from the University of Maryland and completed master's coursework in science communication.

**Abstract:** The effects of loud noise on hearing have been a primary area of focus for the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) since its beginning in 1988. In 1990, the NIDCD took part in an NIH consensus conference on noise and hearing loss which, in part, recommended the need for education programs beginning with school-age children to prevent hearing loss caused by noise. Shortly thereafter, NIDCD developed an educational guide and video for teachers in grades 3 through 6 to teach children about the importance of protecting their hearing. In 1998, a NIHL conference was held, sponsored by the NIDCD, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), NIOSH, and the private sector. As a result of the conference, the WISE EARS! program was born and for almost seven years, a coalition of nearly 90 partner organizations disseminated information materials to the public and health professionals. An evaluation of the WISE EARS! efforts and recommendations for the best communication strategies for the future will be presented.

---

3:05 PM Break





# NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS

## — In Children At Work & Play —

[www.hearingconservation.org/conf\\_children.html](http://www.hearingconservation.org/conf_children.html)

## Spectrum Supplement

October 19-20, 2006

Embassy Suites Hotel Cincinnati – Rivercenter, Covington, KY

Funding for this conference is provided by: NIOSH 1 R13 OH008567-01,  
National Hearing Conservation Association,  
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders  
and the Marion Downs Hearing Center

*Hearing can last a lifetime!*

**NIDCD**  
National Institute on Deafness  
and Other Communication Disorders

**NHCA**

**NIOSH**  
The National Institute for  
Occupational Safety and Health

**Marion Downs**  
HEARING CENTER

UNIVERSITY of  
NORTHERN COLORADO

**OREGON  
HEALTH  
& SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY**