



A Message from the 2010 ARA President, John Greer Clark

References:

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While audiologic rehabilitation provided to the pediatric population has always been held forth as an integral component to the success of children with hearing loss the same may not be said for the adult population. Audiologic rehabilitation beyond the hearing aid orientation has been on a steady decline over the years (Millington, 2001) and has still not positioned itself as the critical component to the success of many with hearing loss that it was recognized to be by the founders of our profession.

Yet to my eyes, the future of audiologic rehabilitation has not been as bright as it is now for a number of years. Catherine Palmer (2009) made the courageous argument that failure to provide best practices in patient care is tantamount to a breach of one's code of ethics. While she was referring to acoustical measures of post fitting hearing aid performance, the same argument holds for best practices in audiologic rehabilitation. Considerable research has amassed over the years in the audiologic literature as well as within journals aimed toward auditory physiologists, cognitive psychologists, and neuroscientists (e.g.: Miller, et al. 2004; Tremblay and Kraus, 2002) clearly demonstrating the benefits of AR services to our adult patients that reach above and beyond the fitting of hearing aids and instruction in their use. A review of any one of our profession's journals over the past several years reveals an infusion of articles devoted to the importance of audiologic rehabilitation. And our own ARA membership is full of dedicated professionals who recognize the profession can and must do more to decrease the functional limitations imposed by diminished hearing as a primary means to drive those with hearing loss to the highest level of participation that they can achieve.

Now is the time for ARA to make its mark. Explore our revitalized website to see what educational opportunities are coming up in AR both through our own institute and through ARA's collaboration with other organizations. Encourage your colleagues to join you at some of these events. Provide your colleagues with a membership form from the website and encourage their participation in ARA and the betterment of their patients. Join the ARA speakers' bureau to help spread the word of the importance of audiologic rehabilitation, or recommend one of those on the speakers' bureau as a presenter at your state or local conference.

It is an honor for me to serve as the 2010 President of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology. I look forward to working with all of you as we (in the words of the ARA mission statement) "promote excellence in hearing care through the provision of comprehensive rehabilitative and habilitative services." The time is now for ARA members to make a concerted push to drive home the message that more can and must be done to help those with hearing loss function to their fullest. We owe no less to the profession and to those we continue to serve.