

## Editorial

I recently sat down with an 87 year old gentleman to discuss the results of his hearing test. Rather than begin with the audiogram, I asked him “Mr. X, tell me what brought you here today. Are you noticing any problems with your hearing?” Mr. X replied, “Well my son has been at me to get a hearing test. He thinks I can’t hear so well but you know I *really* don’t think I’m old enough to need a hearing aid.” This is a scene that is familiar to many of us working with individuals with hearing loss and a reminder of the importance of perception. Buzan<sup>1</sup> (1991) noted that “identity is largely shaped by perceptions of self and other. Perceptions, in turn, are crucial in that they influence the information base on which people form beliefs and create ‘truths’. They influence ‘both what things are seen as facts, and what significance these “facts” carry...” The perception of stigma and ageism associated with hearing loss and hearing aids remains one of the biggest obstacles to successful audiologic rehabilitation.

In this issue of *JARA*, Kenneth Southall, Jean-Pierre Gagné, Mary Beth Jennings pay a fitting tribute to the work of the late Raymond Héту. Dr. Héту was a pioneer in the area of adult rehabilitation with much of his work devoted to exploring the social and cultural aspects of hearing handicap and stigma and the importance of significant others. In their paper, Southall et al. consider stigma due to hearing loss within a model of stigma-induced identity threat. With this framework as a backdrop, they discuss how intervention services might be modified to better serve individuals who show signs that their personal identity is diminished due to the fact that they have a hearing loss. Their work highlights the intricacy of the various components of hearing loss stigma and how we might be better able to customize a rehabilitation plan to our individual client needs.

Kathleen M. Cienkowski  
Editor

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<sup>1</sup>Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2nd ed.). Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester.