

Media Release

Sonova intensifies holistic approach in Audiological Care business, expanding its service portfolio

Stäfa (Switzerland), 29 September, 2021 – Sonova Holding AG, a leading provider of hearing solutions, is expanding its range of Audiological Care services to support patients with different medical needs often co-existing with hearing loss.¹ This includes tinnitus care, auditory-cognitive training as well as fall risk assessment and mitigation. This move underscores Sonova’s holistic approach towards Audiological Care, providing additional value in its services for people with hearing loss.

“Mounting evidence shows us that unmanaged hearing loss can have significant impact on a person’s quality of life, affecting psychosocial, socioemotional, and physical factors,” says Christophe Fond, Group Vice President Audiological Care at Sonova. He adds, “Due to the fact that hearing loss is associated with additional risk factors and co-existing conditions, hearing loss should be treated in the context of other medical needs. By taking a holistic view and expanding our services, we will meet the needs of more patients, serving as their partner in healthy aging.”^{2,3}

Increased self-management options in tinnitus care

Tinnitus affects 10-15% of the adult population and about 80-90% of tinnitus patients have some form of hearing loss that requires clinical intervention.^{4,5} To date, no immediate, 100% effective solution exists to cure tinnitus.⁶ Instead, those approaches which counsel tinnitus patients and allow them to manage their condition according to their individual needs, have proven successful. Sonova Audiological Care recently developed a holistic tinnitus management approach, which is based on current clinical best practice.⁴

Within this holistic management approach, a specific two-stage education program for Sonova’s hearing care professionals (HCPs) was implemented. In several Group Companies in the Audiological Care business, all HCPs are being trained on basic tinnitus care and a subset of HCPs in our medical hubs are receiving comprehensive training to become proficient in advanced tinnitus counseling methods.

Digital offering for auditory-cognitive training

As part of its expanded holistic service portfolio, Audiological Care is also introducing auditory-cognitive training (ACT), a combination of exercises that train cognitive skills like focused attention, divided attention, auditory perception, phonological short-term memory, and working memory. ACT will be available to patients in more than forty locations in Austria, Canada and the Netherlands from October 2021. Accessible on private mobile devices, the digital training suite will offer a gamified experience to the users, designed to improve cognitive skills.⁷

Preventive strategies: fall risk assessment and mitigation

Estimates show that every third person over the age of 65 falls at least once a year⁸. These falls can result in broken bones, hips or head trauma that may lead to hospitalization or even long-term health consequences.^{9,10} Recent research has shown that hearing loss results in up to a three times higher fall risk.^{11,12} Therefore, Sonova Audiological Care aims to raise awareness, provide counseling on common risk factors (including hearing impairment), and inform on preventive strategies such as functional screening, regular physical activity and multimodal exercising as successful ways for supporting healthy aging and reducing the risk of falls.¹³

In addition, Sonova's Audiological Care business is introducing fall risk assessments to educate patients on their specific risk factor for falls. The assessment is performed using body-worn sensors created by a third party. The result is used to make personalized recommendations where appropriate.

Being informed on fall risk is especially relevant for individuals aged 65+, for whom two conditions often associated with ageing – osteoporosis and hearing loss – can be life-changing events, potentially bringing isolation and dependency. Despite this, only one in three people over 65 at high risk of osteoporosis and hearing loss are currently diagnosed in Europe.¹⁴ Osteoporosis has been identified as a potential significant risk factor for hearing loss, and scientific evidence suggests that the risk of hearing loss is increased by 20% in individuals with osteoporosis.¹⁵

To close this diagnosis gap, Sonova Audiological Care has entered an innovative collaboration with Amgen, one of the world's leading biotechnology companies. For more information, please refer to Amgen Europe's website: <https://www.amgen.eu/amgen-media-release/featured-news/amgen-and-sonova-collaboration>

To raise awareness further, AuditionSanté, Sonova's Audiological Care brand in France, will join Amgen France in its roadshow in three major French cities (Paris, Marseille and Lille) in the weeks leading up to World Osteoporosis Day (20 October). The roadshow will offer a hybrid format, providing information about osteoporosis, fracture risks and healthy aging – both live and through digital channels - as well as interactive activities such as Tai chi sessions, Smoothies bikes and a hearing corner. The program of the roadshow is available here: <https://www.toutsurosteoporse.fr/>

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About Sonova

Sonova, headquartered in Stäfa, Switzerland, is a leading provider of innovative hearing care solutions. The Group operates through its core business brands Phonak, Unitron, Hansaton, Advanced Bionics and the brands of the Audiological Care business, e.g. AudioNova, Geers, Boots Hearing Care, Connect Hearing and Lapperre. Sonova offers its customers one of the most comprehensive product portfolios in the industry – from hearing instruments to cochlear implants to wireless communication solutions.

Pursuing a unique vertically integrated business strategy, the Group operates through three core businesses – Hearing Instruments, Audiological Care and Cochlear Implants – along the entire value chain of the hearing care market. The Group's sales and distribution network, the widest in the industry, comprises over 50 own wholesale companies and more than 100 independent distributors. This is complemented by Sonova's Audiological Care business, which offers professional audiological services through a network of around 3,200 locations in 20 key markets.

Founded in 1947, the Group has a workforce of over 14,000 dedicated employees and generated sales of CHF 2.6 billion in the financial year 2020/21 as well as a net profit of CHF 585 million. Across all businesses, and by supporting the Hear the World Foundation, Sonova pursues its vision of a world where everyone enjoys the delight of hearing and therefore lives a life without limitations.

For more information please visit www.sonova.com and www.hear-the-world.com.

Sonova shares (ticker symbol: SOON, Security no: 1254978, ISIN: CH0012549785) have been listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange since 1994. **The securities of Sonova have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "U.S. Securities Act"), or under the applicable securities laws of any state of the United States of America, and may not be offered or sold in the United States of America except pursuant to an exemption from the registration requirements under the U.S. Securities Act and in compliance with applicable state securities laws, or outside the United States of America to non-U.S. Persons in reliance on Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act.**

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³ Saunders, G.H., Vercammen, C., Timmer, B.H.B., Singh, G., Pelosi, A., Meis, M., Launer, S., Kramer, S.E., Gagné, J-P., Bott, A. (2021) Changing the narrative for hearing health in the broader context of healthy living: a call to action, *International Journal of Audiology*, 60:sup2, 86-91. DOI: 10.1080/14992027.2021.1905892.

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⁵ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (UK, NICE). (2020). *Tinnitus: assessment and management. Methods*. NICE Guideline NG155. Published: 11 March 2020.

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⁷ Shah, T. M., Weinborn, M., Verdile, G., Sohrabi, H. R., & Martins, R. N. (2017). Enhancing Cognitive Functioning in Healthy Older Adults: a Systematic Review of the Clinical Significance of Commercially Available Computerized Cognitive Training in Preventing Cognitive Decline. *Neuropsychology Review*, 27 (1), 62-80.

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⁹ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (UK, NICE) (2013). Falls: Assessment and prevention of falls in older people. NICE Clinical Guideline 161. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG161>

¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021). Facts About Falls. <https://www.cdc.gov/falls/facts.html>

¹¹ Lin, F. R., & Ferrucci, L. (2012). Hearing loss and falls among older adults in the United States. *Arch Intern Med*, 172(4), 369-371. doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2011.728.

¹² Jiam, N. T., Li, C., & Agrawal, Y. (2016). Hearing loss and falls: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Laryngoscope*, 126(11), 2587-2596. doi:10.1002/lary.25927

¹³ Sherrington et al. (2019). Exercise for preventing falls in older people living in the community World Health Organization (2017). Integrated care for older people: guidelines on community-level interventions to manage declines in intrinsic capacity. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD012424.pub2>. Retrieved 3 September 2021 from <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/258981>

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