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Can You Hear Me Now?

This project was conducted to determine if people are potentially damaging their hearing by listening at dangerous levels on MP3 players. From an average exposure time and decibel level produced from the player, a prediction could be made about potential hearing damage. The general procedure included going to a local gym. Participants filled out a data collection sheet. The sound level was gathered from their device using a Radio Shack decibel meter and setting it to record for ten seconds. The participant set their player to the level they usually listen to while working out. The sound meter gives a maximum and average decibel level which is recorded on the collection sheet. A handout was given with guidelines from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the average decibel level. The experimenter discussed the decibel level, exposure time and potential risk for hearing loss. There were forty participants - 22 males and 18 females. The age groups were under 18, 18-29, 30-39 and 40+. It was concluded that the group with the highest average decibel level was the 30-39 group at 92 decibels. Five people from the study were shown to be at risk for hearing loss based on the factors of exposure time and decibel level. The results showed that people are potentially damaging their hearing, and 62.5% of participants answered no to the question: Are you aware of government standards for sound exposure? This study improved awareness of hearing loss and how it is irreversible.