PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

Dynamic FM technology “significantly improves” speech recognition in noise for hearing instrument users

Murten, Switzerland, July, 2010
Phonak’s adaptive Dynamic FM systems improve the speech in noise performance of hearing instrument users by up to 50 percentage points more than traditional fixed FM systems, according to the findings of a new study by Dr. Linda Thibodeau of the University of Dallas and the Callier Center for Communication Disorders.

Thibodeau’s study, entitled Benefits of Adaptive FM Systems on Speech Recognition in Noise for Listeners Who Use Hearing Aids*, was published in the June 2010 edition of the American Journal of Audiology. It is the first study to compare Phonak’s ‘Adaptive FM Advantage’ (AFMA) processing technology, the key technological component of Phonak’s Dynamic FM platform, to fixed advantage FM systems for hearing instrument wearers.

“AFMA processing resulted in significant improvements at the higher noise levels for the majority of the participants … ” explains Linda Thibodeau. “The participants were enthusiastic about the new processing both in clinical and real-world settings … On the basis of these findings, it is likely that the AFMA processing would provide significant benefits over fixed FM advantage processing in environments where the noise exceeds 57 dB SPL … .”

Thibodeau tested five adults and five students with moderate-to-severe hearing loss. Participants completed objective and subjective speech recognition in noise measures in competing noise levels ranging from 54- to 80 dBA, using two specific types of FM processing technology: Phonak’s AFMA and fixed FM advantage.

The objective section of Thibodeau’s study recorded AFMA improvements in speech recognition of up to 50 percentage points, while in Thibodeau’s subjective tests participants strongly favored AFMA over fixed FM in the vast majority of situations.

Standout results from the study include:

- 100% of participants (10 out of 10 hearing instrument users) chose AFMA over fixed FM as their processing technology of choice in all subjective classroom activities.

- 100% of recipients also preferred AFMA at two of the six 70-90 dBA aquarium test stations, while 80-90% of participants preferred AFMA at the remaining four stations.

- In the objective ‘first word correct’ test, at a high noise level of 73 dBA, participants managed a mean percentage score of 60% using AFMA compared to just 10% for fixed FM; an improvement of 50 percentage points.

“The ability to catch the words spoken in situations like noisy classrooms and busy public places often means the difference between someone with a hearing loss following a conversation and being completely lost,” says Valentin Chapero, CEO of Phonak. “Linda

Thibodeau's study results prove that for people with a moderate-to-severe loss, Phonak's Dynamic FM technology is the most effective choice for improving understanding in these challenging listening situations."

Note for editors: Thibodeau's study also notes that similar AFMA benefits were reported by Jace Wolfe in his study of listeners with Cochlear Corporation and Advanced Bionics cochlear implants. For more on this please refer to the accompanying press release.

** Benefits of Adaptive FM Systems on Speech Recognition in Noise for Listeners Who Use Hearing Aids, Journal of the American Academy of Audiology, Volume 19, pgs 36-45, June 2010.*

Read the abstract or subscribe to read the full study at: http://aja.asha.org/cgi/content/abstract/19/1/36

About Linda Thibodeau

Dr. Linda Thibodeau has been a Professor at the University of Texas in Dallas since 1996 where she is director of the Pediatric Aural Habilitation Training Specialist Project. Prior to that she worked at The University of Texas in Austin, at the University of Texas Speech and Hearing Institute, in otolaryngology clinics, and in public schools. She teaches in the areas of Amplification and Pediatric Aural Habilitation. Her research at the Advanced Hearing Research Center of the Callier Center for Communication Disorders involves evaluating the speech perception of listeners with hearing loss and auditory processing problems, as well as the evaluation of amplification systems and hearing assistance technology to help such persons.

About Phonak

Headquartered near Zurich, Switzerland, Phonak, a member of the Sonova Group, has developed, produced and globally distributed state-of-the-art hearing systems and wireless devices for more than 60 years. The combination of expertise in hearing technology, mastery in acoustics and strong cooperation with hearing care professionals allows Phonak to significantly improve people's hearing ability and speech understanding and therefore their quality of life.

Phonak offers a complete range of digital hearing instruments, along with complementary wireless communication systems. With a worldwide presence, Phonak drives innovation and sets new industry benchmarks regarding miniaturization and performance.

For more information, please visit www.phonakpro.com or contact:

Matthew Wade
Tel: +41(0)26 672 92 85
Fax: +41(0)26 672 33 44
Email: matthew.wade@phonak.com

Phonak Communications AG
Länggasse 17
CH - 3280 Murten
Tel: +41 (0)26 672 96 72
Fax: +41 (0)26 672 96 77

Phonak – Life is on
We are sensitive to the needs of everyone who depends on our knowledge, ideas and care. And by creatively challenging the limits of technology, we develop innovations that help people hear, understand and experience more of life's rich soundscapes.

Interact freely. Communicate with confidence. Live without limit. Life is on.