Children Speak Up: A Parent's Hearing Loss Hinders Relationships

04/21/09

From denial to missing important details: A new survey reveals that boomers' relationships with their adult children can suffer when a parent has a hearing impairment

ST. LOUIS, April 21 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- In conjunction with Better Hearing and Speech Month in May, Energizer Battery, Inc.'s Energizer Specialty Batteries Division conducted a recent survey(1) to understand how a hearing impairment can affect a parent's relationship with their adult children. Energizer's "All Ears" Hearing Survey polled two groups: boomers who suffer from hearing loss; and adult children who have a parent who suffers from hearing loss. The survey found that nearly half of adult children surveyed (45 percent) said a parent's hearing loss has had an effect on the relationship they have with that parent.

This survey is part of Energizer's year-round "Live Healthy. KEEP GOING(R)" campaign, which encourages baby boomers to lead healthy, active lifestyles - with some help from battery-powered devices like hearing aids.

Additional survey findings include:

-- Hearing loss hinders relationships. Nearly half of adult children surveyed (45 percent) said a parent's hearing loss has had an effect on the relationship they have with that parent. One in three (36 percent) said their parent misses important details about their lives; while nearly one in ten (9 percent) said they don't communicate or share information with their parent as much as they would like to because hearing loss gets in the way.

-- Putting appearance before family? Although 72 percent of boomers said

their hearing loss has affected the relationship they have with their adult children, only 11 percent choose to wear a hearing aid. Among the reasons for NOT wearing a hearing aid? One in three boomers said they don't like the way hearing aids look or feel and they believe the device will make them look or feel older than they really are.

-- Do as I say, not as I do. More than 80 percent of boomers said it was extremely or very important for their adult child to have their hearing checked; however less than half (42 percent) of boomers surveyed had their own hearing screened within the past two years.

-- Dad, can you hear me now? More than four out of ten adult children (44 percent) said their parent needs a hearing aid.

-- You've got to see it to believe it. When it comes to having a visual impairment, nearly all of the boomers polled (99 percent) said they wear glasses/contacts all the time or for specific tasks; whereas only 11 percent wear a hearing aid to correct their hearing impairment.

"Being hard of hearing is a personal struggle, but people with hearing loss often forget that their impairment can have a profound effect on the relationships they have with their friends and family," said Dr. Bary Williams, audiologist and Energizer Specialty "All Ears" spokesperson.

Dr. Williams also stresses the importance of annual medical screenings and hearing screenings in order to maintain a healthier life. "There seems to be a double standard in this country. When it comes to visual impairments, boomers don't think twice about having their vision tested or wearing glasses or contacts, however hearing loss is often ignored," says Dr. Williams. "Hearing health is every bit as important as visual health when it comes to maintaining a high quality of life. If left untreated, hearing loss not only impacts relationships, it can pose a real safety risk."

Better Hearing and Speech Month is a time when Americans are encouraged to get their hearing tested to determine if they have a hearing loss. "Our goal is to educate people about hearing loss prevention, as well as provide solutions to manage hearing health in order to live active and healthy lifestyles," said Steve Carlin, brand manager, Energizer Hearing Aid Batteries.

To address key health issues and provide helpful ways to manage them, Energizer Specialty Batteries also has teamed up with celebrity fitness guru and fellow boomer, Denise Austin, as well as respected physicians in their field to provide tips on heart health and diabetes management. For additional information on hearing health and fitness tips, or to learn more about the Energizer Specialty Battery "Live Healthy. KEEP GOING(R)" program, visit energizer.com/livehealthy.

About Energizer:

Energizer Holdings, Inc. [NYSE: ENR], **www.energizer.com**, headquartered inSt. Louis, Missouri, is one of the world's largest manufacturers of primary batteries, battery-powered devices and flashlights. Energizer, a global leader in the dynamic business of providing portable power geared toward the new digital age, offers a full portfolio of products including the Energizer(R) MAX(R) premium alkaline brand; Energizer(R) Ultimate Lithium; Energizer(R) Advanced Lithium and Energizer(R) Rechargeable(R) batteries and chargers.

The Energizer product line also includes specialty batteries for hearing aids and medical devices, health and fitness devices, as well as for keyless remote entry systems, watches and other uses. Through its flashlight and lighting products unit, Energizer helps bring consumer insight and innovation to these important household devices. Energizer continues its role as a technology leader for on-the-go lifestyles with its Energizer(R) Energi To Go(R) line of portable battery-driven power packs for cell phones and for use with iPod(R) devices

About Dr. Bary Williams:

Dr. Bary Williams, AuD-CCC-A, is a 30 year hearing health industry veteran who was born with significant hearing loss that he never let slow him down. His extensive management work history in industry consulting, manufacturing, multi-site practice management, and voluminous practitioner training exposure has been varied and unique. He was the founder and former President/CEO ofAmerican Hearing Benefits, Inc., one of the largest hearing health care benefits providers in America. He's been a featured speaker at numerous national, state and regional conventions, with extensive experience at each and every level of the hearing health care industry.

(1)The survey was conducted online with a random sample of 1006 men and women whose parent(s) were born between 1946-1964 and are suffering from hearing loss -- all members of the Impulse Research proprietary online panel.The Impulse Research proprietary online panel has been carefully selected to closely match US population demographics and the respondents are representative of American men and women whose parents were born between 1946-1964 and suffer from hearing loss. The second survey was conducted online with a random sample of 1026 men and women, who were born between 1946-1964 ("Baby Boomers"), and suffer from hearing loss -- all members of the Impulse Research proprietary online panel .The Impulse Research proprietary online panel has been carefully selected to closely match US population demographics and the respondents are representative of American men and women born between 1946-1964 and suffer from hearing loss. All research was conducted in March 2009. The overall sampling error rate for these surveys is +/-3% at the 95% level of confidence

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