New Findings Uncover Disparity in Attitudes About Hearing Loss

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Energizer(R) Healthy Hearing survey results call for education campaign to help people manage hearing health

ST. LOUIS, May 15 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- More than 28 million Americans have hearing loss, and a growing number of them are Baby Boomers. However, for many in this generation, avoiding questions about their hearing is as common as avoiding the fact that they are getting older. According to a new Healthy Hearing survey conducted for Energizer Holdings, Inc. (NYSE: ENR), almost seven out of 10 respondents (67.1 percent) said they were concerned about experiencing hearing loss, but only 30 percent felt it was important to actually get their hearing checked. Furthermore, only 11.5 percent have had their hearing tested in the past year, making the other 88.5 percent overdue for a hearing screening.

The survey, which polled men and women ages 50 to 70, is part of Energizer's new Healthy Hearing campaign, which kicks off in May as part of Better Hearing and Speech Month. The goal is to help educate baby boomers and older adults about the importance of hearing health by offering prevention tips online and through the media, as well as teaming up with select national retailers to host hearing screening events free of charge.

One of the goals of the program is to encourage people to get their hearing checked, and inform them about the professionals who diagnose hearing loss. The survey found that more than 70 percent of respondents said they would consult an internist or family doctor about hearing loss, but only 44 percent said they would consult an audiologist, a health professional specifically trained to diagnose and treat hearing loss.

"Some studies have shown that only 14 percent of physicians routinely screen for hearing loss during a physical," said Dr. Michael Valente, director of the Division of Adult Audiology at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. "Since most people with hearing impairments hear well in a quiet environment like a doctor's office, it can be virtually impossible for a physician to recognize the extent of a patient's problem. Without special training and an understanding of the nature of hearing loss, it may be difficult for a doctor to even realize that he or she has a hearing problem."

Dr. Valente hopes that the Energizer Healthy Hearing program will help clear up many of the misconceptions people have about hearing loss, which the survey demonstrates. For example, 38.2 percent believe hearing aids will make them feel old, and 36.8 percent think wearing a hearing aid will be uncomfortable, when the reality is that hearing aid technology is so advanced, most digital hearing aids are virtually undetectable because of their small size.

"The results show that these common myths continue to play a large role in hindering the quality of life that people with hearing loss experience on a daily basis," Valente said. "It's critical for people to not only receive the proper information, but to learn about the new hearing technology available."

Energizer and Dr. Valente's goal is to help raise hearing loss awareness and educate people about the new technological advancements -- not just in hearing devices, but with the batteries -- because these tiny power sources continue to adapt to meet active lifestyles needs. Energizer has introduced new perforated packaging for its hearing aid batteries that is easier and more convenient to carry and use. Energizer also continues to offer the Energizer(R) EZ Change(R), the first and only hearing aid battery dispenser that allows users to insert their batteries without having to handle the tiny batteries or tabs.

"We know it is often difficult for people to overcome the stigmas related to hearing loss, and we're trying to set the record straight through this program," said Anne Bannister, director of marketing for Specialty Batteries at Energizer. "We want to educate people about hearing loss prevention, as well as provide solutions for others to manage their hearing health, so they can 'keep going' and live active, enjoyable lifestyles."

As part of the Energizer Healthy Hearing campaign, the company is continuing its support of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), a non-profit organization comprised of hearing professionals and other leaders in the industry. For more information about hearing loss and how to find an audiologist, go to asha.org.

About Energizer:

Energizer Holdings, Inc. [NYSE: ENR], http://www.energizer.com, headquartered in St. 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) e2(R) Lithium(R) and Energizer(R) e2(R) Titanium Technology(R) performance brands; Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) Rechargeable batteries and chargers; and miniatures brand batteries.

The Energizer product line also includes specialty batteries for hearing aids and medical devices, as well as for keyless remote entry systems, toys and other uses. Through its flashlight unit, Energizer brings innovation to this important household device. Energizer continues its role as a technology leader as it launches Energizer(R) Energi To Go(R), portable battery-driven power packs for cell phones.

*This research project was conducted by Impulse Research Corporation for Energizer, in order to assess attitudes and behavior with respect to hearing loss among older men and women. The survey was conducted online with a random sample of 500 men and women aged 50 to 70, representing a cross-section of seniors in this age group -- all members of the CyberPulse(TM) Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel has been carefully selected to closely match US population demographics. Research was conducted in April 2007.

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CO: Energizer Holdings, Inc.; Washington University School of Medicine; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; ASHA

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