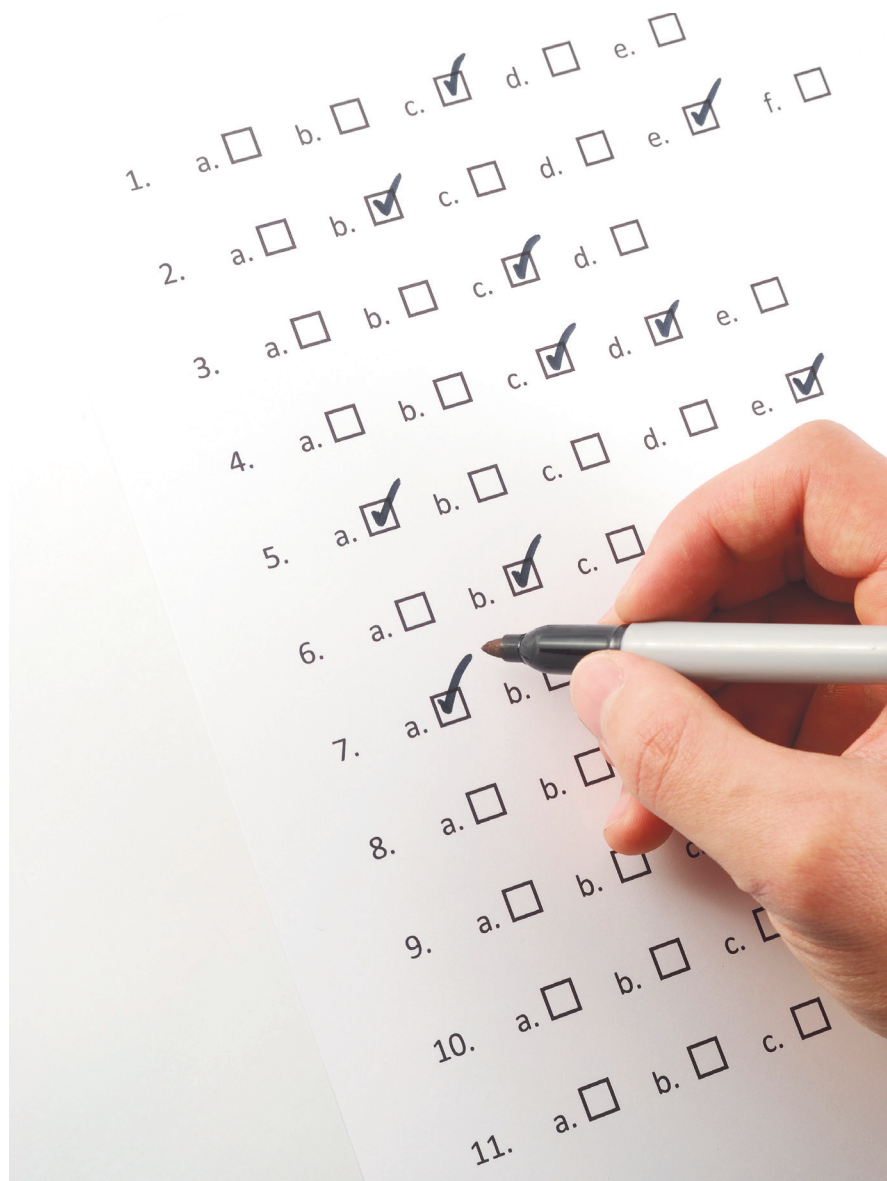


# EuroTrak 2012

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**The results of the 2012 EuroTrak UK survey have arrived and it provides interesting reading for hearing care professionals. As this is the second time the survey has been undertaken we can start to analyse the trends and compare the data as the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers' Association looks to build up a longitudinal picture of hearing care in our country. Some results are better than 2009, others have dropped!**

The EuroTrak UK survey was completed by 14,896 people, with 9.1% stating they have a hearing loss.

Following the introduction of the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) EuroTrak survey in 2010, the 2012 version has now been released, realising the hopes of EHIMA's Secretary General Søren Hougaard. In 2010 Hougaard said, "The results of the first round have been so positively received and have generated so much interest that I sincerely hope there will be a budget for this every two years." Not only has the survey been repeated, it has been expanded in terms of questions and countries.

The inaugural survey was undertaken in three European countries: UK, France and Germany. This year, results

will be available once again for those three countries plus Italy, Switzerland, Norway and Japan. The 2012 results have been released for the UK and France with Italy, Switzerland, Norway and Japan expected to follow in October/November. It is not clear when the German survey will be released!

As with the original survey, EuroTrak UK 2012 was designed and executed by the Anovum market research agency in Zurich, Switzerland, on behalf of the EHIMA. Step one in the process was approaching the general population, with a view to getting approximately 15,000 responses to assess the prevalence of hearing loss and hearing aid ownership. The next stage involved detailed questions of the target groups of the hearing impaired

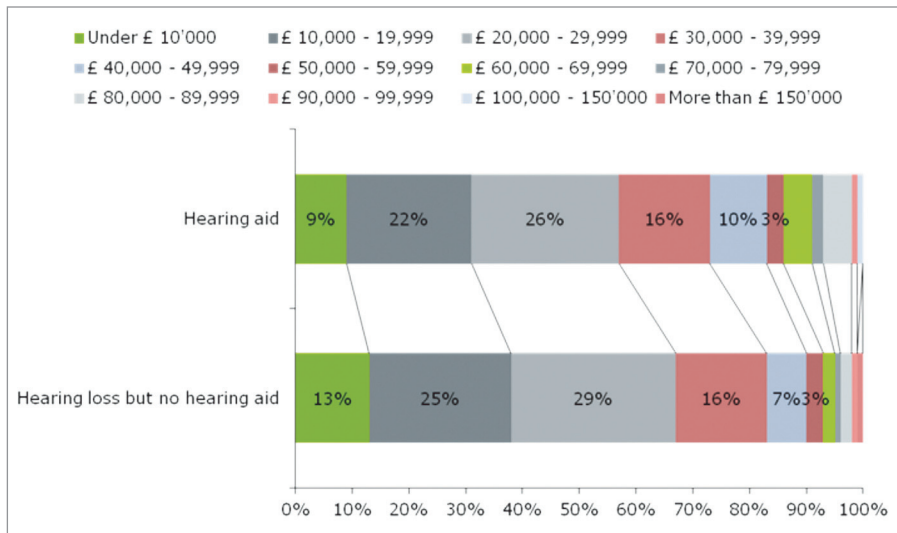


Fig 1. Work Competitiveness. People with hearing aid(s) tend to have a higher personal income compared to impaired non-owners.

with hearing aids and the non-adopters; with the view to looking at topics such as satisfaction, or reasons for non-adoption.

This year the survey questions have been extended to look at the economic and health impact of hearing loss including the potential social cost savings due to the use of hearing aids; work competitiveness; depressive and dementia symptoms. Questions also cover hearing tests and the prevalence of tinnitus. The results show the potential cost savings to society due to hearing aid use, thanks to hearing aid users feeling that their hearing instruments help them at work and enable them to be more competitive in the workplace. People fitted with a hearing aid also tend to have a higher personal income

than people with a hearing loss but no hearing instrument (Fig. 1). The new survey also shows that hearing aid users have a much lower risk of being depressed compared to non-users and additionally exhibit fewer symptoms of dementia through becoming forgetful.

**The highest adoption rate**

The latest 2012 EuroTrak UK is based on a similar overall representative sample size of 14,896 people (2010: 14,980), of whom 1,296 had impaired hearing. This allows the survey

to continue to provide a comprehensive UK market overview based on its analysis of the 501 hearing aid owners and 795 non-owners with a hearing loss. The survey indicates a hearing loss prevalence of 9.1% in the UK, just below the 9.5% shown in the previous 2010

“The results show the potential cost savings to society due to hearing aid use.”

survey, with this rising to 40.4% for the 74+ age group (increased from 38.2%). Interestingly, hearing loss prevalence in the under 14 years category has increased from 1.7% to 2.8% - perhaps a positive sign that babies are being picked up earlier with the Newborn Hearing Screening programme? (Fig. 2) Meanwhile, the rate of

Fig. 2. Hearing loss prevalence UK 2012.

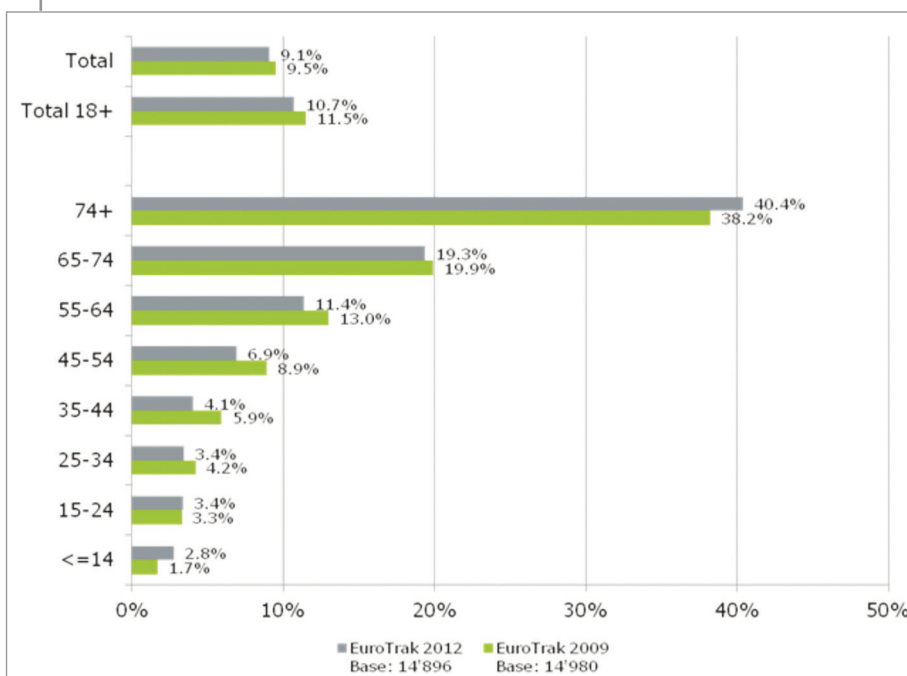
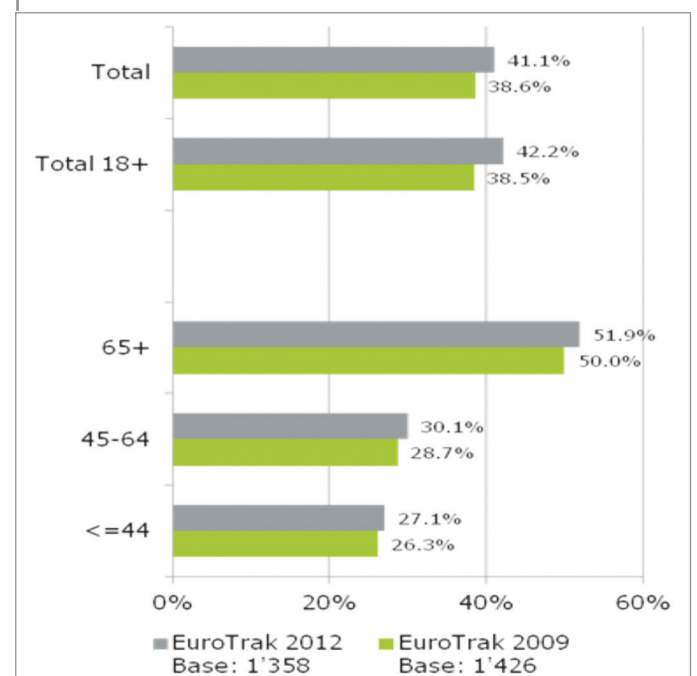


Fig. 3. Hearing Aid Adoption Rate UK 2012



# Research ■ The UK results

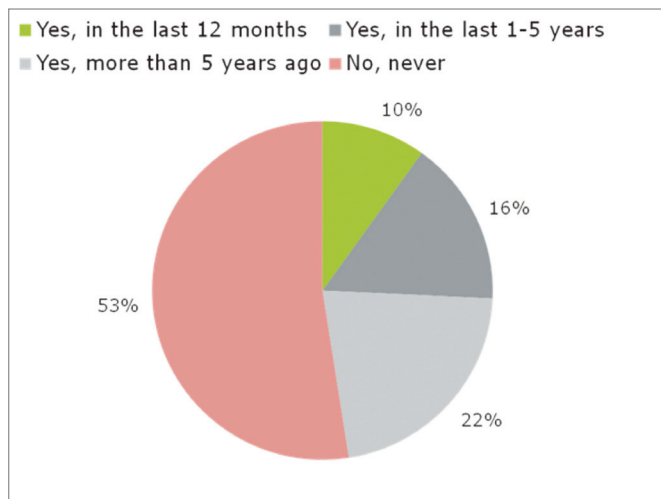


Fig. 4. More than half the population state their hearing has never been tested.

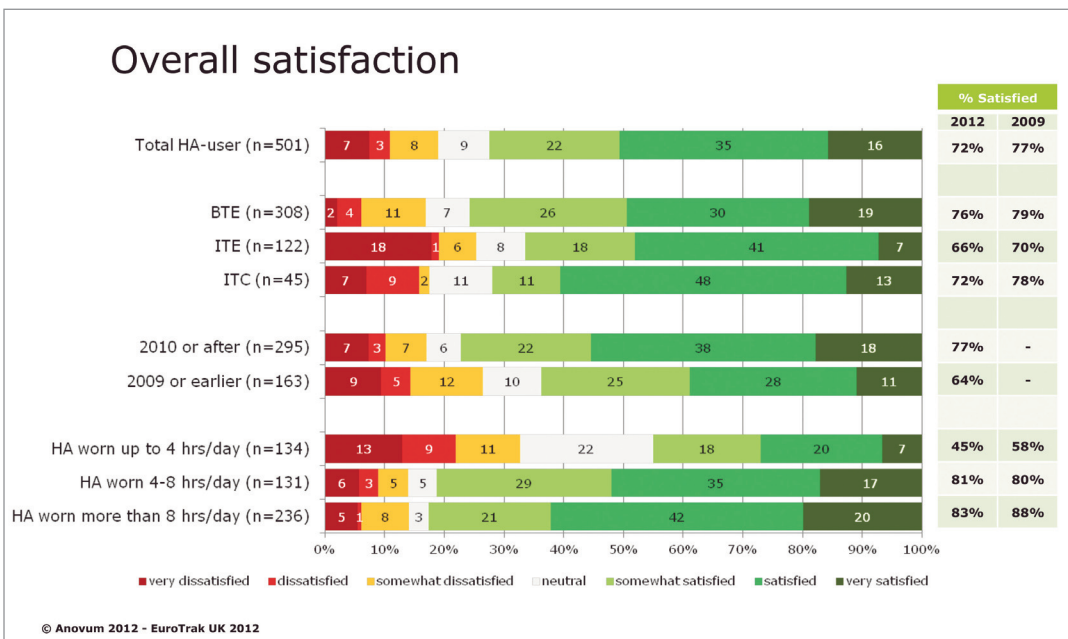
adoption of hearing aids in the UK is now 41.1% (up from 38.6% in 2010), which continues to be amongst the highest in the world (Fig. 3).

The extended EuroTrak 2012 UK adds extra insight to

## “The rate of adoption of hearing aids in the UK is now 41.1%”

some important new areas. The new survey now reveals that over half the UK population (53%) has never had a hearing test compared to only 29% in Germany stating they have not been tested (Fig. 4). It also provides some of the reasons for people dropping out from the process

Fig. 5. Overall satisfaction by product type, purchase date and hours worn.



Søren Hougaard is delighted that not only has EHIMA been able to complete EuroTrak again, but it has been extended to more countries.

of getting hearing aids, after they have initially been recommended for treatment. EuroTrak 2012 shows that 25% of the population has experienced tinnitus, although only 5% experience it permanently; and most people have never considered any treatment for their tinnitus.

### Overall satisfaction

Of the 501 hearing aid users in the EuroTrak UK 2012 survey, 84% received their aid(s) from the NHS, which is a much higher proportion than the 74% of NHS users sampled by the previous EuroTrak 2010 survey. This chance sampling difference may account for an otherwise unexplained drop in satisfaction in the latest survey among the users of hearing aids purchased from the private retail sector, while satisfaction among NHS hearing aid users remains at around the same level as in 2010.

Overall satisfaction has dropped to 72% from 77% in 2009; the highest satisfaction is found among users who wear their hearing aids for more than 8 hours per day, bought them in 2010 or later and are wearing BTEs! (Fig. 5)

However, the overall trend towards binaural fitting in the UK continues to show encouraging improvement, with 64% of recent fittings now being binaural, compared to only 47% prior to 2009 (Fig. 6). The modernity of hearing aids being used is improving, with 79% of the 2012 sample being fitted in 2009 or later and the age of currently used hearing aids now being 2.1 years (down from 2.6 years), with the overall lifetime of hearing aids worn by experienced users typically being 5 years (Fig. 7). With hearing aids on average used for 8.3 hours a day, hearing aid reliability shows an encouraging improvement.

For the first time, survey participants were asked about wireless technology. Not surprisingly, younger hearing aid owners use

## >> EuroTrak Fast Facts

The EuroTrak UK report is more than 70 pages long, here are the highlights.

- Stated hearing loss prevalence: 9.1% (18+: 10.7%).
- Binaural hearing loss: HA owners: 57%, HA non-owners: 76%.
- Tinnitus prevalence: 25% (self stated, sometimes or permanently).
- Hearing Tests: 26% had a hearing test in the last 5 years.
- Hearing aid adoption rate (HA penetration) total: 41.1% (2009: 38.6%).
- Total age group 18+: 42.2 % (2009: 38.5%).
- 54% of HA owners have binaural treatment. Trend rising (2009: 47%).
- 73% of the hearing impaired discussed hearing loss with an ENT doctor or family doctor.
- 56% got hearing aids recommended from the ENT or family doctor (drop out rate = 23%).
- 49% of the GP consultations referred to an ENT, 38% to a hearing aid dispenser / audiologist (incl. NHS). 13% recommended no action.
- 43% of ENT consultations referred to a hearing aid dispenser / audiologist (incl. NHS), 37% recommended a hearing aid, 26% recommended no action.
- Hearing aids are believed to have a positive impact on the job.
- People with hearing aids tend to have a higher personal income.
- Hearing aid owners have a much lower risk of being depressed and a lower risk of being forgetful compared to impaired non-owners.
- 84% received NHS hearing devices.
- 79% of the currently owned HAs were fitted in 2009 or later.
- The average age of the currently owned HAs is 2.1 years.
- The median age of hearing aids before replacement is 5 years.
- On average, HAs are worn 8.3 hours a day.
- 85% of the currently owned HAs either had no service need or only once.
- 61% of hearing aid owners have never heard of wireless technology in connection with hearing aids. Only 10% of the older (65y+) rate wireless technology as very important but 43% of the younger (up to 44 y).
- 72% of the HA owners are satisfied with their HAs.
- The more hours worn per day, the higher the satisfaction.
- Satisfaction with HAs bought 2010 or after is higher than with HAs bought before.

wireless technology with their hearing aids more often and it is more important to them. 61% of the under 44 years sector have heard about wireless technology, with 21% of them actively using it, compared to 32% of over 65s having knowledge of wireless but only 6% actually using the technology.

When questioned about the importance of wireless 43% of the under 44 years category believe it to be a very important connection with their hearing aids. This contrasts to only 10% of over 65s believing it to be very important (Fig. 8).

Lawrence Werth, Chairman of BHAMA said of the latest results, "This latest EuroTrak UK 2012 survey again expands our understanding of the market, with helpful new data about the benefits that users receive from their hearing aids, both in the workplace and in general life, as well as explaining why some non-users have yet to be motivated to get hearing aids. There are also important lessons for our profession that to gain the satisfaction of our clients, we must still be careful to counsel new hearing aid users to have realistic expectations about the benefits of their latest high-tech amplification."

**Victoria Adshead**

*Article written from the data of the EuroTrak UK survey 2012, completed by Anovum for EHIMA (European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association)*

### [ References ]

1. EuroTrak UK 2010 – available from BHAMA at: [www.bhama.org.uk](http://www.bhama.org.uk).

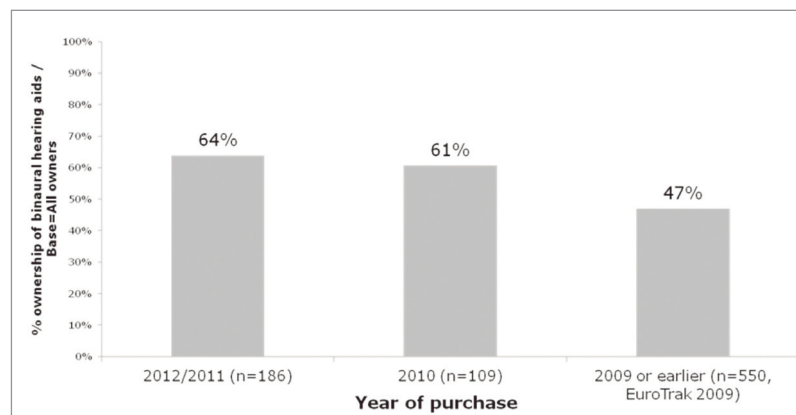


Fig. 6. Binaural treatment by purchase/fitting date.

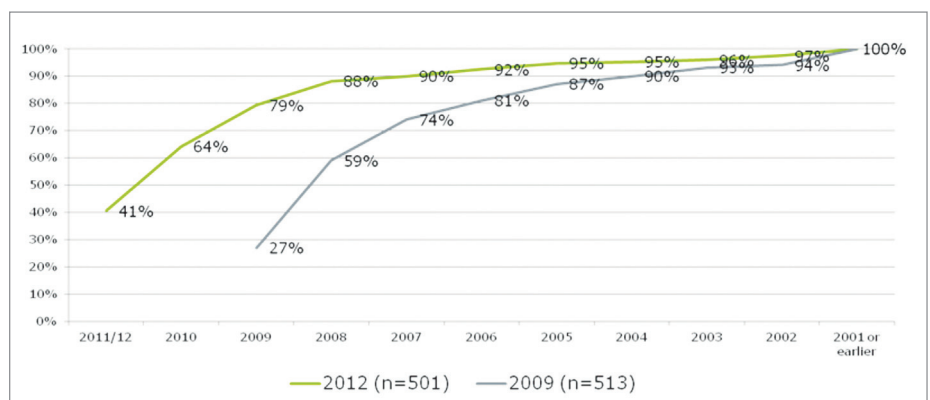


Fig. 7. Year of purchase/NHS fitting. The mean age of currently owned HAs : 2012: 2.1 years vs 2009: 2.6 years.