

Update for APH Mental Health

Junior Travel Award

Laura Keur-Huizinga

PhD candidate at Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery, section Ear & Hearing

In June, I attended the World Congress of Psychophysiology in Geneva, Switzerland. For this congress, I applied for the Junior Travel Award in March and was one of the lucky winners. I presented preliminary results of my PhD project at the congress and attended many other presentations. The World Congress of Psychophysiology lasted four days, is organized by the International Organization of Psychophysiology (IOP) and mostly involves neuroscientific and psychophysiological research on the interplay between mind, brain, and body.

My PhD project focusses on increased stress and listening effort associated with hearing loss. To this end, we used objective and subjective measures to assess the mental effort required to listen to speech in a noisy environment in adults with and without hearing loss. During my presentation, I shared preliminary results from this study. For example, we looked at pupil dilation while the subjects listened to masked speech, which is used as a measure of mental effort exerted when completing a cognitively challenging task. As previous research has also shown, the preliminary results suggested that the hearing impaired subjects showed a lower pupil size increase compared to the normal hearing subjects. By comparing these results with other simultaneously assessed physiological measures, we hope to gain more insight in why this difference occurs.

The congress included several symposia regarding mental effort and physiological measures, such as cardiovascular and EEG measures. I learned a lot from these other presentations, which provided me additional insight into the mechanisms of mental effort and how this is influenced by various different factors. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet fellow researchers and discuss our research projects. We shared our struggles, advice and knowledge, which I very much enjoyed. Of course, I also combined the congress with some sightseeing in Geneva itself. Overall, I had a great time and learned a lot that week. I would also like to take this opportunity again to thank APH Mental Health for the support!