



HCHS/SOL Question By Question Instructions Hearing History Form (HHE/HHS), Version A

General Instructions

This section of the interview asks questions related to the auditory (hearing) system. Current hearing problems are assessed, use of hearing aids, and exposure and protective practices related to noise exposure. This questionnaire is administered directly to participants; no proxy reports from family members are permitted. If at all possible this questionnaire should be administered prior to administration of their hearing test. Administration of the questionnaire prior to this clinical testing may avoid the problem of obtaining different responses to some questionnaire items because of their participation in their hearing test. For example, some participants may be more inclined to report hearing loss following the test, particularly if they had difficulty with the test.

- Q1 The intent of the first question is to obtain for the participant an overall assessment of perceived hearing impairment. Participants can select only one response option which should be read in the order presented on the screen/form. If you observe the participant wearing a hearing aid, the phrase, “without a hearing aid” should be added to the question. Some hearing aids fit inside the ear canal and cannot be observed via casual glance. If the participant volunteers that he or she is wearing a hearing aid or wears one on occasion, the question should be restated with the phrase “without a hearing aid” added at the end.
- Q2 This is a screener question to determine which set of questions pertaining to hearing loss should be administered. Those younger than age 65 will be administered Q3-Q12; those 65 years of age and older will be administered Q13-Q22. These question sets are similar but not identical to each other. It is therefore important to administer the correct question set.

Prior to administering Q3-Q12 or Q13-Q22 read the following to the participant: “Please answer yes or no, or sometimes to each of the following questions. Questions refer to your hearing. If you use a hearing aid please answer the way you hear without the hearing aid.” The interviewer should place emphasis on the word “without”.

Response options for Q3-Q22 include: “no”, “sometimes”, and “yes”. Only one response option can be selected and recorded for each question. The participant should be encouraged to choose a response; skips are not allowed. A non-response on even a single item will result in a missing score for hearing handicap. The reference is always the person’s hearing, not conflicts or difficulties caused by another person’s hearing. If the participant does not engage in a particular activity (i.e., does not go the movies or theater events) the correct response is “no”.

Q3-Q12 This question set is administered to participants less than 65 years of age. Following administration of these questions the interviewer should skip questions 13-22 and start administering the hearing aid questions beginning with question 23.

Q13-Q22 This question set is administered to participants 65 year of age and older.

Q23-27 cover history of hearing aid use. A hearing aid is a device used to amplify sound, particularly at frequencies used for understanding speech. Hearing aids are to be distinguished from assistive listening devices which are used in limited settings such as churches and movie theaters. Hearing aids are typically dispensed by an audiologist or hearing aid dealer and are custom made based on the hearing profile of the person. You should check yes for question #23 if the participant indicates that they have ever worn a hearing aid. “No” should be checked if they have a history of only using an assistive listening device.

The remainder of Section C, Hearing Aid Use is skipped if the participant indicates that they have never worn a hearing aid or they don’t know or refused to answer question #23. Question #24 asks if the participant used a hearing aid in the past 12 months. Those denying use in this time period or who respond they don’t know or refused to answer are not asked the last two questions in this section.

Q25 Question asks how long they have used a hearing aid. You should read the response options until the participant selects a time period (i.e., “less than 6 weeks, 6 weeks to 11 months, etc). You may have to repeat the response options to the participant if they fail to select the time period on the first administration. Participants may indicate that they have not used their hearing aid for a contiguous period of time (e.g., “I used this year and three years ago, but not last year”). In this case count only the duration of the current use (in this example, this year). Short breaks of less than 6 months are okay but 6 months of longer is considered stopping. Round duration to the nearest full unit.

Q26 The question asks the participant to indicate how often they used a hearing aid in the past 12 months. You should read the response options until the participant selects a response (i.e., “always”, “usually”, etc).

Section D, Q27-Q35 ask about noise exposure, an important risk factor for hearing loss.

Q27 Question asks about military service. It is in this section because most military personnel have been exposed to the sounds of gunfire which can damage the auditory system.

Q28 Those responding yes to Q27 are asked how long they served in the military. You should read the response options until the participant selects a response (i.e., “less than two years”, “2 to 5 years”, etc).

Q29 Question asks if they ever used hearing protection during their service. You should emphasize the word “ever” when delivering this question. Examples of hearing protection include ear muffs and soft foam ear plugs.

Q30 Question asks if they have ever fired a gun. Does **not** include BB-guns or paintball guns. Participants with a history of military service should have the phrase “not in military” added to the end of the question in order to distinguish between civilian and military exposure to gunfire.

- Q31 Those responding “yes” to Q30 are asked Q31 which ascertains the number of days the participant fired a gun in the past year. You should read the response options until the participant selects a response (i.e., “none”, “1 to 5 days”, etc).
- Q32 Question assesses non-work related exposures to loud noise. Examples of power tools which generate loud (and potentially damaging levels of noise) include lawn mowers, chain saws, and leaf blowers. Music played at levels which make communication difficult between people standing next to one another is also potentially damaging. The wording of this question is somewhat complex, so you may need to repeat it if you sense that they had difficulty understanding.
- Q33 Those who respond “yes” to Q32 are asked Q33 to determine if they had ever worn hearing protection devices when exposed to these loud noises. Examples of hearing protection include ear muffs and soft foam ear plugs.
- Q34 Question asks about personal music system use in the past 7 days. You should emphasize the end of this question “in the past 7 days”. If you feel that they did not understand the question give examples of these devices such as iPod, MP3 music player, CD player, etc.
- Q35 Those indicating yes to Q34 are administered Q35 which asks the participant to estimate personal system use in the past week. Include only time that the device was used with earphones (headphones or ear-buds). You should read the response options until the participant selects a response (i.e., “less than 1 hour”, “1 to 2 hours”, etc). Because of the large number of response options, you may need to repeat them to the participant.