



MyLink:

Outstanding FM benefits now for ITE users too.

Summary

The new Phonak **MyLink** FM receiver brings, for the very first time, all FM advantages to the ears of BTE (behind-the-ear) and ITE (in-the-ear i.e. custom products) hearing instrument users; provided it incorporates an activated T-coil. This field study was performed in order to evaluate customer satisfaction and benefit with this new Phonak 'world's first FM receiver with neck loop and MicroLink technology inside'. The tests were conducted on 14 ITE users, mainly first time users of FM systems. Results show outstanding efficacy of the induction loop strategy to provide high quality FM support to custom products users.

Introduction

The new **MyLink** is a multi-frequency universal receiver compatible with all hearing instruments (HI) that incorporate a T-coil. MyLink offers the opportunity for custom product users to profit from the outstanding benefits that FM systems provide such as better speech understanding in noisy environments or improved hearing over a larger distance. With MyLink, no further FM HI program is necessary. MyLink is worn directly around the neck via a supple and elegant loop. Through the loop, the audio signal is sent to the HI's T-coil via induction. MyLink can be operated in the 'T' (exclusive T-coil mode, the microphone of the HI is muted) or 'MT' (mixed mode, the user gets the HI amplified and the induction's transmitted sound). This allows MyLink to adapt to every type of communicational or hearing situation and to any personal listening desires. MyLink was specially designed to have a very intuitive functioning. No further parameter setting of the hearing instrument is necessary. MyLink contains a volume control and an on/off switch. It was mainly developed for first time users of FM that want an easy to use, highly compatible device but do not want to compromise on sound quality or efficiency.

Goal of the Field Trial

The goal was to evaluate the efficacy of MyLink, an inductive loop - FM system in ITE users.

Setup of the study

Level of satisfaction and hearing benefits participants felt when using MyLink were evaluated with a questionnaire investigating ease of use, perceived sound quality, speech intelligibility and subjective benefits. Questionnaires included 40 questions.

Subjects and Devices

14 binaural ITE users, aged 26 to 97 years (average = 68.9; S.D. = 17.5) entered this multi-site study, conducted in Australia and Switzerland. Volunteers were equipped with the MyLink at dispenser shops or clinic, only one subject was an experienced FM user. MyLink was used with the FM transmitter Easylink. Included subjects were not exclusive Phonak HI customers. Amongst them, 12 were Phonak ITE users, including custom products from the lines *Savia*, *eXtra* and *Perseo* and 2 were GN Resound ITE users, wearing bilateral *Canta* devices. MyLink was tested over one week.

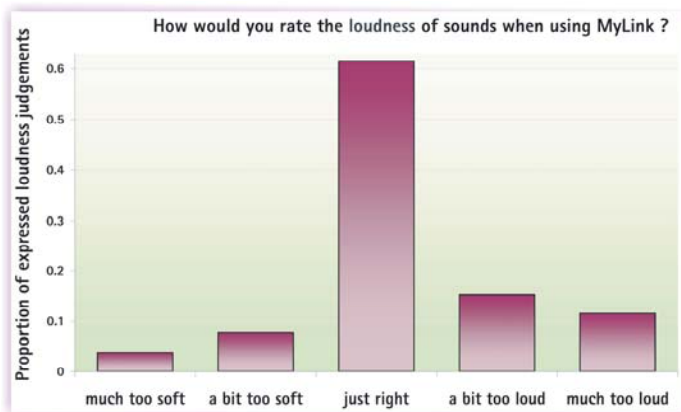
Results: *MyLink is Easy!*

Results showed that half (n=7) of the included clients used MyLink in 'T' mode, the other half (n=7) in the 'MT' mode. The reported results perfectly reflect the different possibilities of MyLink usage, either in conjunction with amplification or in direct exclusive FM mode. None of the subjects reported a need to change the sensitivity of the T-coil in the hearing instrument. The average time MyLink was actively used was about 2.9 hours a day (SD = 2.4), 4.2 days a week (SD = 2.1), with testing duration of approximately 12 hours. On average, participants needed 11.4 min to understand MyLink, and 12.6 min to familiarize themselves with the FM transmitter.

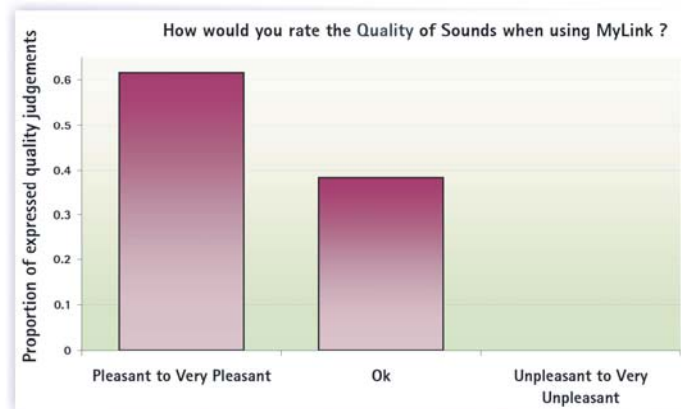
Inductive Sound: *Loudness and Quality*

All clients experienced the sound coming from the wireless system as equally loud to both ears, which clearly indicates that the transmission of sound via the induction loop is homogeneous and constant in both ears, thanks to the satisfying positioning of T-coils in custom products. Sound loudness was experienced as being "just right" in 61.5% of the cases, showing the accuracy of the default volume setting of MyLink. In 92% of the remaining cases, participants reported they

were able to change loudness using the volume control and ended up with a satisfactory volume setting.

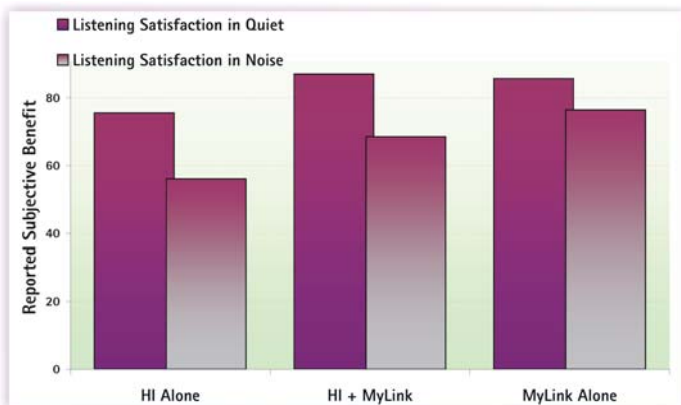


The sound transmitted to ITE devices via the inductive loop was judged as being "pleasant" to "very pleasant" in 62% of the cases and "ok" in the remaining answers. It is noteworthy that no single test person expressed a negative judgement on the quality of sound delivered via MyLink.



Benefits in Quiet and Noisy Environments

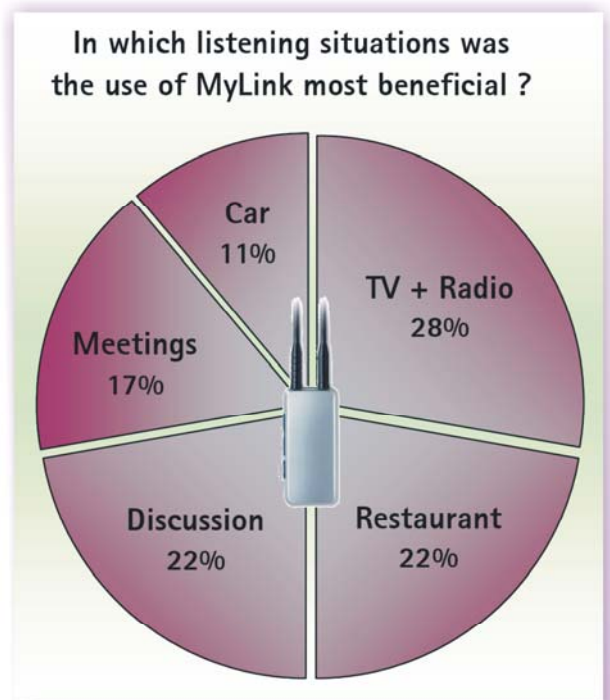
The figure below summarizes the results obtained for the question: "Overall, how satisfied are you when using MyLink..." in 2 situations, quiet and noisy environments.



The graph shows a clear general improvement of listening satisfaction, both in Noisy and Quiet environments either when adding MyLink to HI use (HI alone vs. HI + MyLink conditions) or when using MyLink in the 'T' mode (HI alone vs. MyLink alone conditions). In Quiet, the most satisfying listening condition was the combined use of HI + MyLink whereas in Noisy places, the condition MyLink alone (T) was slightly preferred, although the size of sampled participants did not allow for any statistically significant observation.

Valuable improvement in important environments, pleasant facilitation in leisure places

Participants reported MyLink to be mostly beneficial in a variety of situations. Listening to TV or radio, in restaurants or while discussing with family or friends constituted the most reported situations. MyLink' benefit proved to be significant in situations like professional meetings or when in the car for significant proportions of test persons.



Conclusions:

In conclusion, MyLink offers an easy, intuitive and efficient solution to new FM users wearing ITE (custom products) hearing instruments, providing a satisfying sound quality and hearing experience in a broad variety of listening environments.

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