9. Stigmatization of Hearing Loss as it Relates to Aural Rehabilitation Outcomes for Elders in Care Facilities
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**Purpose:** This project was developed as a pilot study for future research. Our goal is to identify negative stigmatization of hearing loss and to determine its affect on the success of aural rehabilitation in elder care facilities. Extensive research has shown that negative stigmatization is correlated to poor aural rehabilitation outcomes for Elders in European countries. Our hypothesis is that similar results can be found in the United States. If our hypothesis is proven, we hope that stigmatization can be addressed through the counseling process in the future.

**Methods:** We worked with Arbor Court Retirement Community in Lawrence to establish personal relationships with the residents for future recruitment purposes. The student researcher made weekly visits for a year to facilitate games and relationship development. Our research is based around the implementation of the group-based aural rehabilitation program, ACE. The program will target 10-15 elders, age 65+, with and without hearing loss. During the first and last sessions, several surveys will be given to gather data regarding attitude toward hearing loss, perception of hearing loss, and aural rehabilitation success.

**Conclusions:** Due to circumstances at Arbor Court beyond our control, our recruitment period for our first research attempt was very short. As a result, we were unable to recruit enough participants to run our research. We will be recruiting again through the summer term and plan to run our first participants in July.