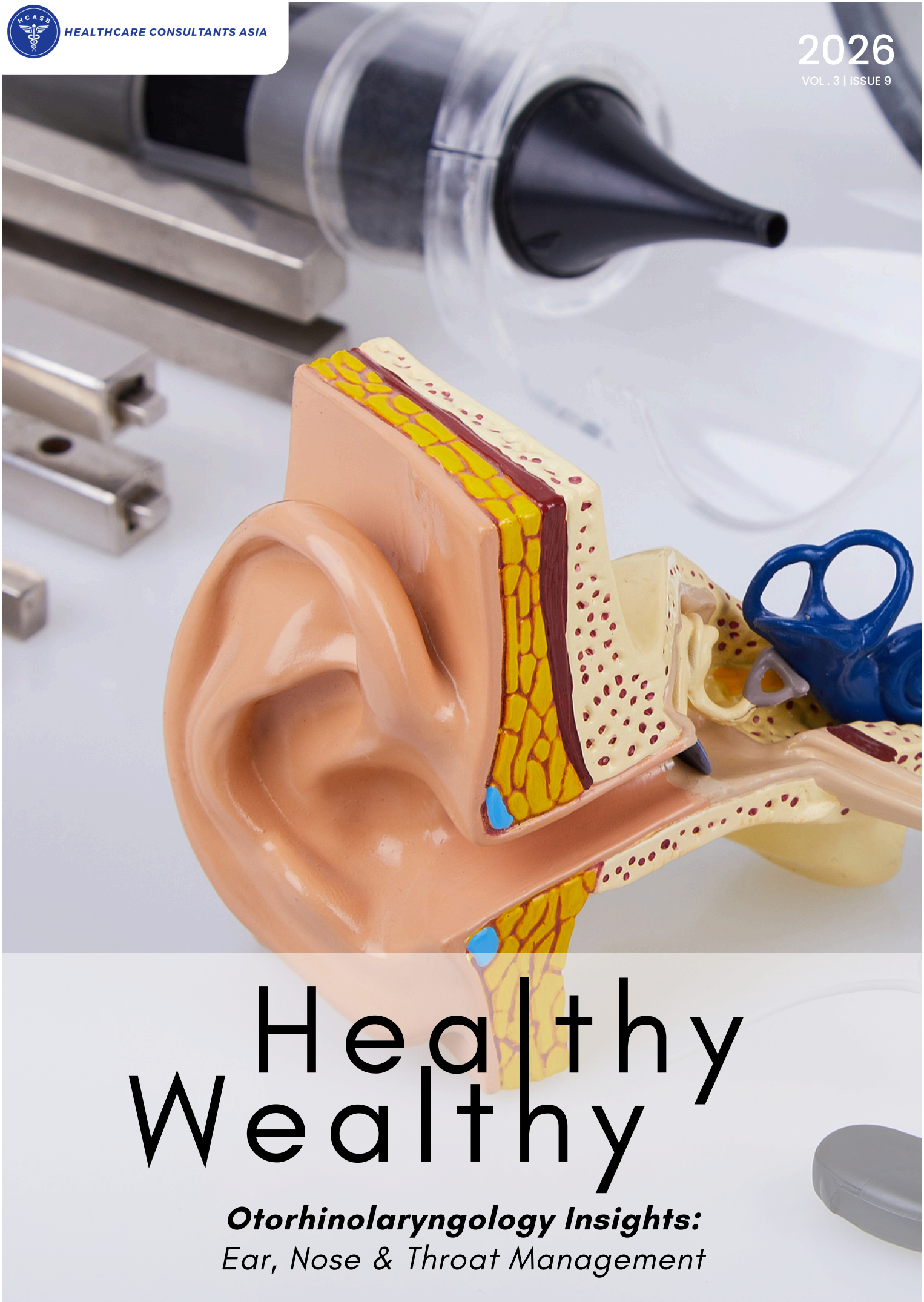
HEALTHCARE CONSULTANTS ASIA

2026

VOL . 3 | ISSUE 9



Healthy Wealthy

Otorhinolaryngology Insights:

Ear, Nose & Throat Management

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	About Us | Vision & Mission
02	Editor's Note | Dr. Thiruchelvan Balakrishnan
03	Author Introduction | Prof. Dr. Ramiza Ramza Bin Ramli
04	Rhinitis, Sinusitis & Rhinosinusitis: Restoring Clear Breathing
05	Rhinitis, Sinusitis & Rhinosinusitis: Signs and Symptoms
06	Rhinitis, Sinusitis & Rhinosinusitis: Diagnosis and Screening
07	Noise-Induced Hearing Loss & Tinnitus
08	Noise-Induced Hearing Loss & Tinnitus: Signs and Symptoms
09	Noise-Induced Hearing Loss & Tinnitus: Diagnosis & Screening
10	Clinical Advisory & Independent Medical Opinion Services
11	Events in Malaysia | October | Medical, Law & Insurance

ABOUT US

Vision

To be the region's most trusted provider of specialist medical services, delivering accurate expertise and second opinions through a comprehensive network of medical specialists across Malaysia and Asia.

Mission

To uphold and advance our specialist medical advisory standards through global best practices, proactive engagement with clients and partners, and strict credentialing of our specialist panel.

Healthcare Consultants Asia (HCASB) is a trusted subsidiary of Mudah Healthcare. As experts in third-party medical reporting, HCASB specializes in providing detailed and comprehensive medical assessments that help streamline processes and ensure clarity in claims management.

With a panel of over 130 specialist doctors, HCASB is dedicated to delivering accurate and high-quality reports, offering valuable insights and supporting informed decision-making for our clients. Our reports foster fair, transparent resolutions, reinforcing the integrity and efficiency of the claims process.

HCASB is looking forward to continuing our commitment to excellence in medical reporting, making a meaningful impact on the success of our partners in the industry.

From The Desk of Dr. Thiruchelvan

Welcome to the October edition of Healthy Wealthy by HCA

As we progress through the year, our commitment remains focused on advancing patient care through clinical excellence, early intervention, and multidisciplinary collaboration. This month, we are pleased to spotlight the field of **Otorhinolaryngology**, a vital specialty that plays a significant role in the prevention, detection, and management of a wide range of medical conditions.

October's edition features **our Specialist of the Month, Prof. Dr. Ramiza Ramza Bin Ramli**, whose expertise in Otorhinolaryngology reflects a strong dedication to delivering comprehensive and patient-centered care. From early diagnosis to surgical management and long-term recovery, his work encompasses a broad spectrum of conditions that impact patients' health and quality of life.

Prof. Dr. Ramiza's insights provide valuable perspectives into the clinical decision-making involved in surgical care. His emphasis on timely detection, evidence-based treatment planning, and preventive management is especially relevant in understanding medical necessity, treatment outcomes, and recovery expectations across various surgical conditions. His perspectives offer stakeholders a deeper understanding of patient evaluation, treatment pathways, and the importance of early intervention in achieving optimal clinical outcomes.

I hope you find this month's insights both informative and inspiring. As always, thank you for being a part of our community and for your continued trust in Healthcare Consultant Asia.

Warm Regards,
Dr. Thiruchelvan Balakrishnan
Chief Executive Officer
HCASB



Specialist of the Month

Prof. Dr. Ramiza Ramza Bin Ramli

Senior Consultant Otorhinolaryngologist (ENT) & Rhinology Specialist



With a deep commitment to advancing subspecialized ENT care and medical education, Prof. Dr. Ramiza Ramza Bin Ramli is an esteemed Senior Consultant Otorhinolaryngologist and Rhinology Specialist. He earned his MBBS from the University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago in 2001, and completed his Master of Medicine in Otorhinolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery (MMED ORL-HNS) at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in 2008. Driven by a commitment to clinical excellence, he further completed an international Fellowship in Rhinology and Skull Base Surgery at Northwestern University, Illinois, USA, in 2013.

Prof. Dr. Ramiza's extensive clinical expertise encompasses complex rhinology and skull base pathologies, advanced endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS), allergic rhinitis management, and endoscopic dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR). As Head of the Otorhinolaryngology Department at the School of Medical Sciences, USM, he oversees specialized patient care and leads clinical training programs in rhinology, skull base surgery, and general head and neck surgery. He adopts a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach, regularly working with ophthalmologists, neurosurgeons, and allergists to deliver optimal clinical outcomes.

Throughout his distinguished academic and clinical career spanning over two decades, Prof. Dr. Ramiza has served as a Senior Medical Lecturer and Senior Consultant at USM, following his early service as a Medical Officer in Hospital Raja Perempuan Zainab II (HRPZ2). Beyond his university and hospital roles, Prof. Dr. Ramiza is a key leader in national ENT governance. He served as President of the Malaysian Society of Otorhinolaryngologists Head and Neck Surgeons (MSOHNS) and the College of ORL-HNS (2017/2018), Chairman of the ORL-HNS National Conjoint Board (2023-2024), and actively contributes to the National Curriculum Committee for ORL-HNS training in Malaysia.

Prof. Dr. Ramiza is an active clinical researcher and author, serving as Principal Investigator on numerous research grants covering chronic rhinosinusitis, nasal polyps, allergic rhinitis treatments, and community nasal health campaigns. He has authored over 20 publications in indexed medical journals—including Cureus, Visual Journal of Emergency Medicine, and Anatomical Sciences Education—and authored book chapters on allergic rhinitis facts and myths. Through ongoing clinical work, academic mentorship, and community health transfer projects, he continues to shape the field of otorhinolaryngology and rhinology across Malaysia.

RHINITIS, SINUSITIS & RHINOSINUSITIS – RESTORING CLEAR BREATHING

Prof. Dr. Ramiza Ramza Bin Ramli

Nasal congestion, nasal discharge, excessive sneezing, facial itchiness, and persistent post-nasal drip are among the most common healthcare complaints in Malaysia. Due to our humid tropical climate and high dust mite exposure, millions suffer daily from acute and chronic inflammation of the nasal passages and sinuses.

While often brushed off as "just a cold or Selsema," rhinitis and sinusitis can significantly reduce quality of life—causing poor sleep quality, chronic daytime fatigue, recurrent headaches, and reduced work productivity. The encouraging reality is that rhinitis and sinusitis are highly treatable. Through modern medical therapies, precise diagnostic endoscopy, and minimally invasive procedures, lasting relief and normal breathing can be successfully restored.

Although they share similar symptoms, rhinitis and sinusitis affect the nasal system differently:

- **Rhinitis:** Nasal cavity inflammation is called rhinitis. Rhinitis can be an allergic response triggered by environmental factors i.e., allergen (such as dust mites, pollen, or mold) where it is called Allergic rhinitis, but where there is no allergen involved it is known as Non-allergic rhinitis (triggered by temperature changes, emotion, stress, virus or bacteria, hormone changes e.g. pregnancy, pollution and medication).
- **Sinusitis:** A condition where the tissue lining the sinuses becomes swollen and inflamed which causes drainage of the mucus from the sinuses to be disturbed therefore leads to mucus build-up, stagnant mucus in the sinuses creating an ideal reservoir for bacterial growth. Anatomical obstruction of the sinus ostium - connecting passage between the sinus cavity and nasal cavity, such as from deviated nasal septum, enlarged nasal turbinate or nasal polyp will cause sinusitis.
- **If rhinitis left untreated causing sinusitis**, then it will be called Rhinosinusitis also locally known as Resdung. Rhinosinusitis depending on the duration can be divided into Acute rhinosinusitis which is less than 4 weeks -some guidelines extend up to 12 weeks and Chronic rhinosinusitis which lasts 12 weeks or longer continuously.



Signs and Symptoms





Common signs of rhinitis, sinusitis and rhinosinusitis (Upper airway inflammation) include:

- **Persistent Nasal Congestion:** Difficulty breathing through one or both nostrils. This symptom can occur in all three conditions.
- **Facial Pain and Pressure:** Fullness around the forehead, eyes, cheeks, and nose. These symptoms usually occur in sinusitis and rhinosinusitis
- **Excessive Nasal Discharge:** Thick clear mucus discharge (Mucoid discharge) in rhinitis or colored nasal discharge in sinusitis and rhinosinusitis. This symptom can occur in all three conditions.
- **Post-Nasal Drip:** Mucus draining down the back of the throat, triggering chronic coughing. This symptom commonly occurs in rhinitis.
- **Reduced Sense of Smell and Taste:** Inability to smell flowers, food, or dangerous odors like smoke. This symptom can occur in all three conditions.
- **Ear Fullness or Pressure:** Blockage in the Eustachian tube connecting the back of the nose to the ear. This symptom commonly occurs in rhinitis.

Who is at Higher Risk?

Factors that increase the risk of developing upper airway issues include:

- Environmental allergies (especially indoor dust mites)
- Structural nasal issues (such as a deviated nasal septum, enlarged turbinates)
- Nasal polyps (non-cancerous growths in the nasal passages)
- Asthma or respiratory conditions
- Regular exposure to cigarette smoke or air pollution

Diagnosis and Screening

An Otorhinolaryngology (ORL) also known as ENT specialist uses several precise tools to evaluate the nasal passages:

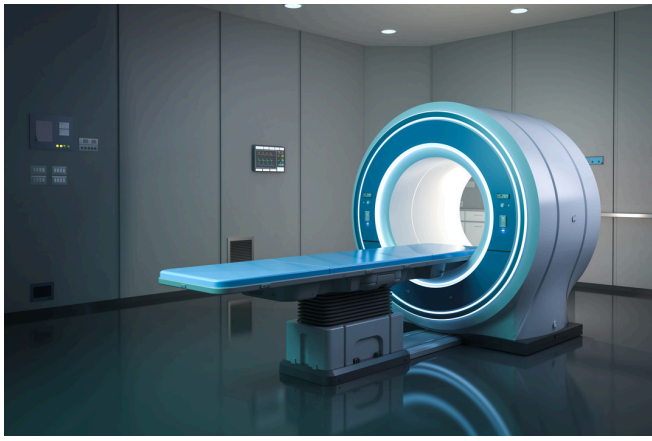
- Nasal Endoscopic examination: A rigid or flexible scope with a camera inserted into the nasal cavity to inspect nasal cavity, sinus openings, tissue health, and anatomical structure.
- CT scan: Provides detailed 3D imagery of the bony sinus structures mucosal lining and fluid accumulation.
- Allergy Screening: Identifies specific allergic triggers to guide long-term prevention e.g. skin prick test.



Treatment Options

Treatment typically follows a stepped approach:

1. Medical Management: Saline rinses, nasal corticosteroid sprays, antihistamines, and targeted short courses of medications e.g. antibiotics.
2. Allergen Avoidance & Immunotherapy: Environmental control and targeted treatments to desensitize the immune system to allergy triggers.
3. Minimally Invasive Surgery: For patients with structural blockages, large polyps, or non-responsive sinusitis, procedures such as Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS) or Balloon Sinuplasty clear blockages while preserving normal tissue.



Living with constant nasal blockage or sinus pressure is not something you simply have to accept. Early evaluation by an ORL/ENT specialist can identify the root cause of your symptoms and provide a clear path back to effortless, comfortable breathing.



NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS & TINNITUS – PROTECTING YOUR WORLD OF SOUND

Prof. Dr. Ramiza Ramza Bin Ramli

Every day, we experience sound in our environment, such as the sounds from television and radio, household appliances, and traffic. Normally, these sounds are at safe levels that don't damage our hearing. But sounds can be harmful when they are too loud, even for a brief time, or when they are both loud and long-lasting. These sounds can damage sensitive structures in the inner ear and cause noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL).

Noise-induced hearing loss occurs when excessive sound volume damages the delicate sensory hair cells in the inner ear (cochlea). Once these hair cells are destroyed, they cannot regenerate, leading to permanent hearing impairment often accompanied by tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears). Fortunately, noise-induced hearing loss is almost entirely preventable with proper awareness and protective habits.

Here are the average decibel ratings of some familiar sounds:

- **Normal conversation: 60-70 dBA**
- **Movie theater: 74-104 dBA**
- **Motorcycles and dirt bikes: 80-110 dBA**
- **Music through headphones at maximum volume, sporting events, and concerts: 94-110 dBA**
- **Sirens: 110-129 dBA**
- **Fireworks show: 140-160 dBA**



Hearing loss can occur suddenly after a single extremely loud sound (like an explosion), but more commonly develops gradually over years of repeated noise exposure.

- **How Noise Damages Ear Structure**: Sound vibrations travel through the ear canal to the cochlea, where tiny microscopic hair cells convert sound into electrical signals for the brain. Continuous exposure to high volumes (above 85 decibels) overworks and permanently destroys these hair cells.
- **What is Tinnitus?** Tinnitus is the perception of sound —such as ringing, buzzing, clicking, or hissing—when no external sound is present. It is often an early warning sign of underlying inner ear hair cell damage.

Otorhinolaryngology Insights



Signs and Symptoms

In its early stages, hearing loss is subtle and often noticed first by family members rather than the patient:

- Difficulty hearing conversations in noisy environments (restaurants, family gatherings).
- Asking others to repeat themselves frequently.
- Raising the volume on televisions, radios, or mobile devices higher than comfortable for others.
- Feeling that people are "mumbling" when they speak.
- Persistent ringing or buzzing sensations in one or both ears.

Who is at Higher Risk?

- Individuals using headphones/earphones at high volumes for extended periods.
- Workers in noisy industries (construction, manufacturing, aviation, nightlife/entertainment).
- Individuals frequently attend loud concerts or motor sports.
- Older adults with age-related inner ear changes (presbycusis).

Diagnosis and Screening

Evaluation by an ENT specialist and Audiologist includes:

- **Otoscopy:** Direct inspection of the eardrum and ear canal to rule out earwax blockage or fluid.
- **Pure Tone Audiometry (PTA)**: A standardized hearing test in a soundproof room to evaluate hearing thresholds across different pitch frequencies.
- **Tympanometry:** Measures middle ear function and eardrum movement.
- **Speech audiometry:** determines how loud speech needs to be for you to hear it, and how clearly you can understand spoken words.
- **Auditory brainstem response (ABR):** checks how your brain and hearing nerves respond to different sounds.



While permanent inner ear damage cannot be reversed, modern solutions can successfully restore communication and quality of life:

- **Prevention Habits:** Protect your ears. Wear earplugs or earmuffs when you're around loud sounds, like if you're at a concert
- **Turn the sound down.** That includes any time you use earbuds or headphones. The World Health Organization recommends keeping the volume on personal devices at 80 dB for adults and 75 dB for kids.
- **Modern Hearing Aids:** Highly discrete, digitally advanced hearing devices that amplify specific missing frequencies while filtering background noise.
- **Walk away.** If you can, move away from the source of the sound.



Hearing health directly impacts your emotional well-being, cognitive health, and social connections. Protecting your ears today ensures you continue to enjoy the sounds of life for years to come. If you notice ringing in your ears or struggle to follow conversations, schedule an ENT hearing assessment today.



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At HCASB we work with over 130 medical specialists with focus on over 23 core specialities. All assessments are grounded in clinical evidence, imaging correlation and longitudinal outcome analysis.

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- **Functional capacity evaluation**
- **Medico-legal reporting**
- **Second opinions for complex medical cases**
- **Claims clarification support**

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WhatsApp or Call to speak to our Medico-Affairs Team

018-208 9070

Events & Conferences

MEDICAL CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Digital Health Malaysia Conference 2026
2-4 Oct | Asia Pacific University

International Seminar on Medical Physics 2026
10-11 Oct | Management & Science University, Shah Alam

27th IMAM Annual Scientific Conference 2026
24-25 Oct | The Everly Hotel, Putrajaya

47th Annual Congress of the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA 2026)
29-31 Oct | Sheraton Petaling Jaya

LAW CONFERENCES & EVENTS

National Conference on Business and Human Rights 2026
7-8 Oct | AICB Centre of Excellence, KL

CPD Live & CPC Pocket Series: Conveyancing Process 101
15 Oct | Wisma Badan Peguam Malaysia, KL

INSURANCE CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Cyber Resilience for Insurance Industry Vendors
13 Oct | AICB Building, KL

18th Asian Institute of Insurance Bowling Tournament 2026
17 Oct | Sunway Megalanes

Liability Insurance Seminar 2026
22 Oct | AICB Building, KL

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2026

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