

Audiologists assess and treat hearing and balance disorders.

Audiologists play a critical role in end-of-life care. Patients approaching end of life may have decreased hearing as a result of their disease progression or as a result of the ototoxic medication used in their treatment. Hearing loss is also common in the elderly. This demographic of people form an increasingly significant part of the end-of-life population.

The role of the audiologist includes:

Identifying Hearing or Balance Difficulties

Audiologists can assess hearing and balance function to identify whether intervention is necessary.

Providing Hearing Rehabilitation

Appropriate interventions may include using hearing aids or assistive listening devices. This can help reduce the overall cognitive effort involved in listening, which can reduce patient fatigue.

Educating and Counselling

Audiologists can help patients remain connected to loved ones and care providers and help ease frustration with communication difficulties. Audiologists can inform patients, loved ones and care providers about how to use and care for hearing aids or assistive devices.

Increasing Comprehension

Audiologists help patients with hearing loss participate in decision-making by developing communication strategies to allow them to understand medical information and treatment risks and benefits.

Enabling Self-Expression

Optimizing hearing ensures that patients can maintain autonomy and a sense of control throughout their illness. Being able to communicate also promotes interpersonal communication and fulfillment of end-of-life goals.