

The impact of auditory hallucinations on 'living well' with dementia: findings from the IDEAL programme.

What is the effect of hearing things which are not there on people with dementia?

People with dementia sometimes start to hear sounds and voices that are not there. We call these 'auditory hallucinations'. Hearing sounds and voices can be troubling for some people. Other people who hear voices can live with them and get used to them.

The medicine to treat people with auditory hallucinations is not suitable for people with dementia and can be harmful. We need to know more about how auditory hallucinations affect people with dementia. This will help us find better ways to treat them.

We wanted to know whether hearing sounds and voices affects the feeling of living well for people with dementia.

We worked with 1251 people living with mild-to-moderate dementia and their carers in the IDEAL programme to answer this question. We asked carers whether the person they had been looking after seemed to hear voices in the last month. We asked people with dementia questions about how they felt about their lives.

Nearly a tenth of people with dementia (7.8%) heard sounds and voices. People with dementia who were hearing sounds and voices rated their quality of life and wellbeing more negatively. Auditory hallucinations had a negative impact on people's lives.

We need to develop non-drug treatments to help people with dementia who hear sounds and voices. This may also help them to live well.

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which appeared in the **International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry** in March 2021.