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Preventive Strategies for Occupational Hearing Loss
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Background
- Occupational hearing loss is the third most common chronic condition in the US, and most commonly affects manufacturing industry workers.
- A integrative literature review was performed to evaluate qualitative and quantitative research on prevention strategies for occupational hearing loss in manufacturing industries.
- The objective of this review is to determine which prevention strategies have been described in the literature, and which strategies have been shown to be effective and evidence-based.

Methods
- The Health Belief Model (HBM) was used as a conceptual framework to guide this review.
- The HBM is based on the belief that a behavioral change can occur if successfully realizing its six concepts: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy.

Results – Hearing Loss
- Various risk factors like advancing age, male gender, noise exposure and mutations in genes like EAY4 were associated with higher noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL).

Limitations
- This literature review is largely restricted to industrial and agricultural professions.
- Review is limited in making any correlations to other professions involving increased noise such as musicians or the aviation community.

Conclusions
- Screening audiograms and hearing protective device (HPD) use with appropriate associated education are important evidence-based prevention strategies for occupational hearing loss.
- Additional research in other avenues like genetic and environmental risk factors and at home screening for NIHL strategies is warranted.
- Informative for nurses who are interested in occupational health specialties or obtaining certification to conduct occupational hearing tests.