

Auditory Processing Disorders

Auditory processing disorders (APDs) are referred to by many names: *central auditory processing disorders, auditory perceptual disorders, and central auditory disorders.* APDs affect the auditory areas of the brain. Children and adults with APD often report difficulty hearing in background noise, in rooms that reverberate (echo) and/or other less-than-ideal listening situations.

APD is an audiological diagnosis, and therefore, the audiologist is the professional who generally makes the diagnosis. To properly diagnose APD, special tests need to be administered by an audiologist. Individuals with APD usually pass standard hearing tests because standard hearing tests are designed to test the quietest sounds one can hear. APD may be present with or without hearing loss.

APD is often associated with various learning disabilities. Children with APD experience difficulties in less-than-ideal (noisy) listening situations and may have difficulties with reading, spelling, attention, and language problems. APD is common in older adults, particularly when hearing loss is present. It is likely that many processes and problems contribute to APD in children.

In adults, neurological disorders such as stroke, tumors, degenerative disease (such as multiple sclerosis), and head trauma can contribute to APD.

APD in children and adults often is best managed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals that may include audiologists, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, and teachers, to evaluate and treat hearing, language, cognition, and academic issues.

Although APD treatment is usually determined based on the likely cause of APD, a variety of treatment approaches may be recommended. These approaches can include medical treatment, hearing aid amplification, assistive listening devices, auditory training, and special listening strategies. Treatment strategies are usually provided by audiologists, although physicians, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, teachers, and other professionals may be involved