

Abstract

With a low uptake rate of <10% in mainland China (EHIMA, 2023; Heine et al., 2019; Ji et al., 2015), it is important to understand hearing aid (HA) fitting characteristics among first-time older users, to plan strategies to encourage uptake.

Initial fitting data from Oticon's database (82,834 users & 146,304 ears) were analyzed.

Results indicated:

- Significant delay in HA uptake and adoption increased with more severe HL.
- Initial gain settings below prescribed targets for most users.
- Bilateral fittings were prevalent.
- Receiver-in-canal (RIC) the most common style.
- Open fittings with minimal occlusion and low gain were preferred, reflecting a trend toward emphasizing comfort and “natural” sound quality.

This is the first study to report current HA fitting practice in Chinese older users.

Objectives

In response to the growing older population with HL in mainland China, currently with over 400 millions affected individuals (Wang et al., 2024), we examined patient characteristics & HA fitting parameters among first-time users aged 55 and above in 2023.

Methods and Materials

- Inclusion criteria: (1) aged ≥ 55 ; (2) no previous HA experience, & (3) mean pure-tone average (0.5, 1, 2, and 4 kHz) \leq severe HL.
- Data extracted: age, degree of HL, laterality of HAs, HA style, earpieces and vent sizes, and the adaptation level of frequency-gain prescription.

Results

- 76.6% bilateral fitting; 83.3% RIC fitting
- 87.2% prescribed with adaptation level 1 (gain lower than prescribed target).

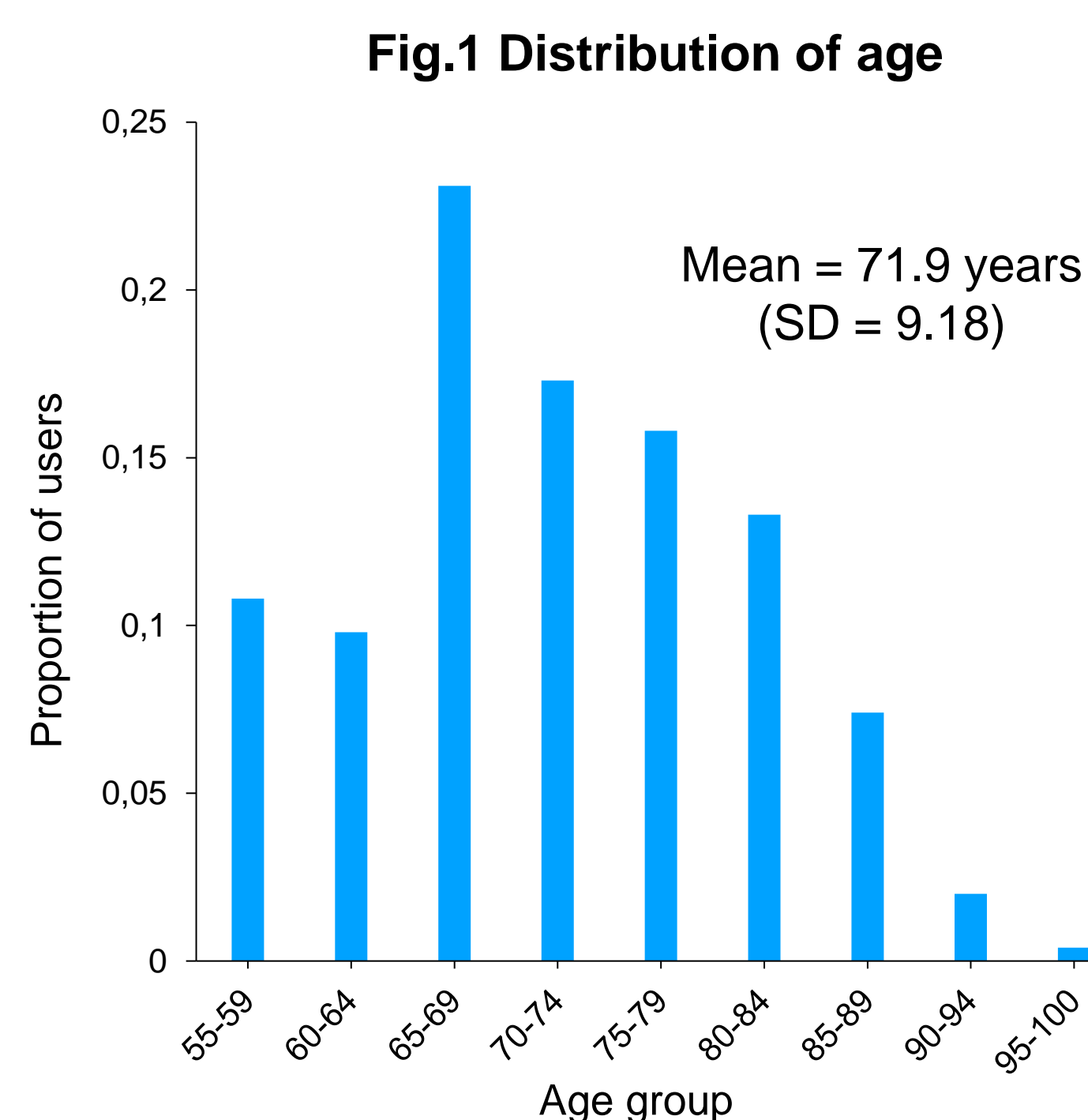


Fig.2 Hearing thresholds of fitted ears (mean \pm SD)

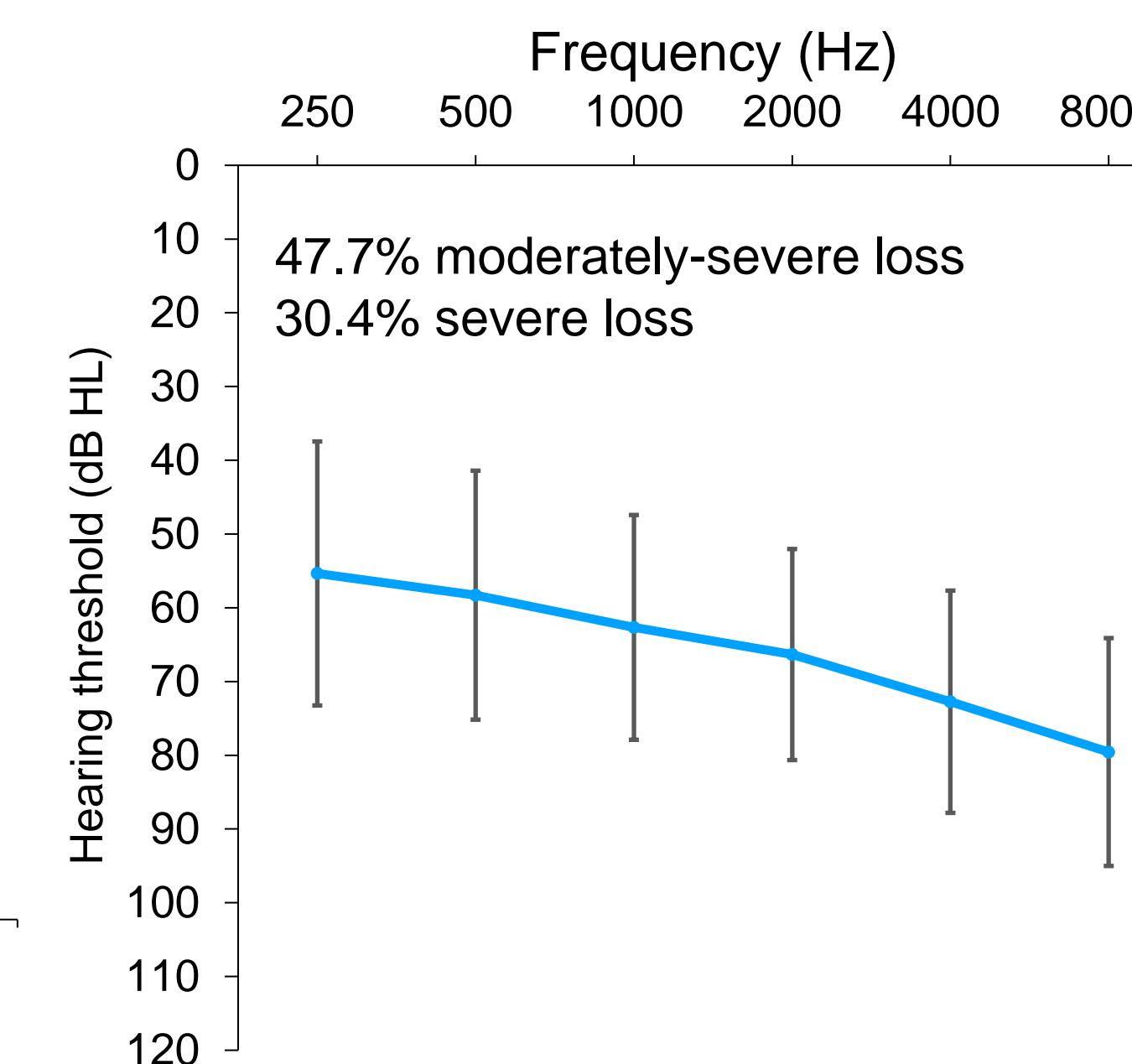
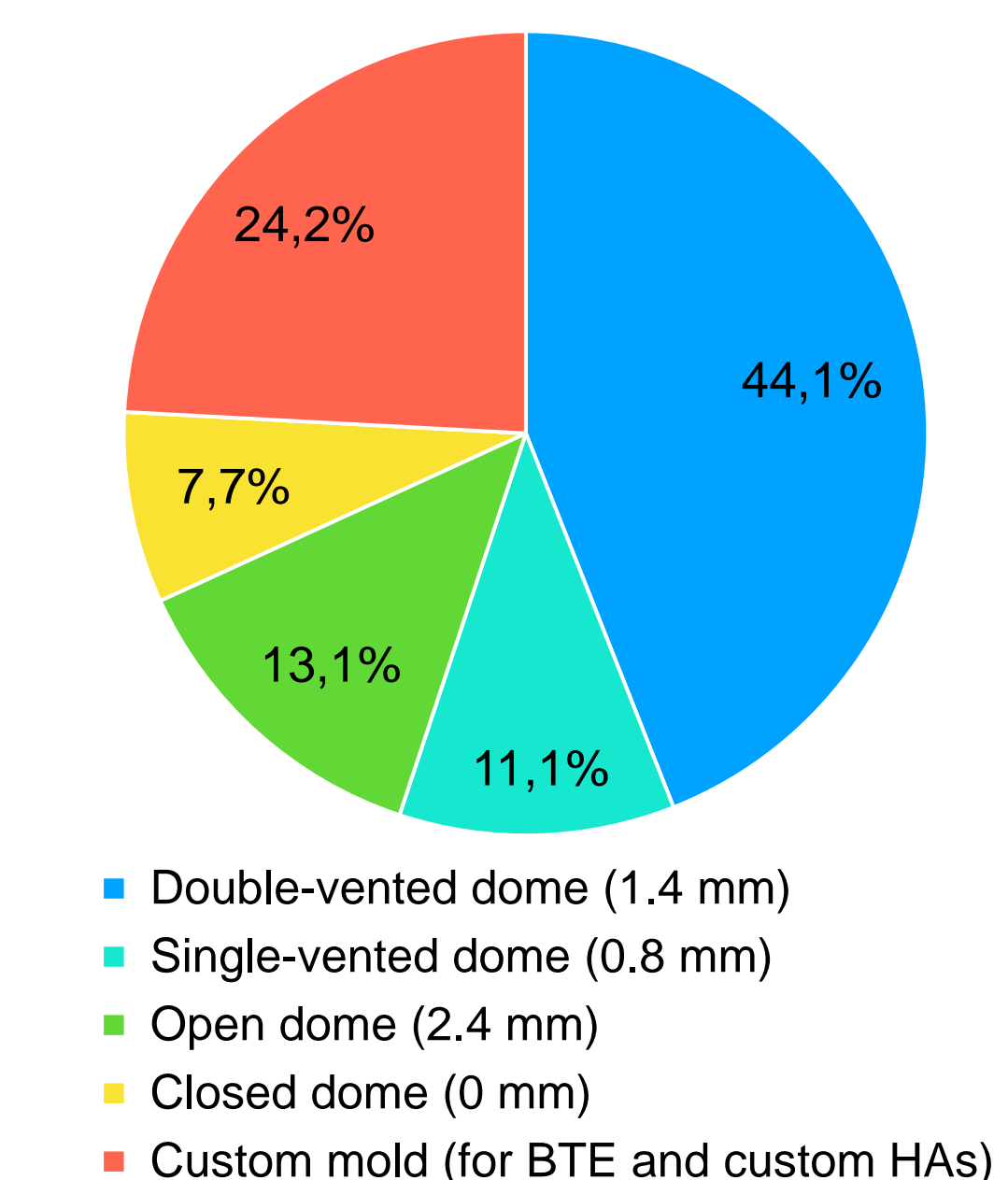


Fig.3 Earpieces and vent sizes



Conclusion

- First-time users tended to defer HA uptake until HL became more severe
- There are uncertainties whether a cookie-cutter approach has been taken in selecting HA fitting parameters
- Further study needed to examine:
 - Outcomes associated with these settings.
 - How these initial settings evolve with extended use and adaptation.

References

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