Notes from Southern Tier Hearing Services

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MAKING FRIENDS WITH ANEMONES

"Hair cells" are sensory cells located in the inner ear that get their name from their hair-like projections, called "stereocilia." Hair cells play a critical role in enabling us to hear because they sense sound waves and convert them to electrical signals that are sent to the brain. Unfortunately, once hair cells in the human ear die (due to noise exposure), they do not regenerate, and hearing is lost. However, recent research involving sea anemones (water-dwelling predatory animals named after the flowers) have the ability to regenerate hair cells with a specific protein. When scientists extracted this protein, they found it could regenerate hair cells in mammals, which is a finding that may someday benefit those with acute hearing loss.

TIP OF THE WEEK

One of the best ways to evaluate the outer hair cell functionality of the inner ear is to perform OtoAcoustic Emission testing. Ask your hearing healthcare professional if he or she has the capability of performing this important diagnostic audiological test.

P.S. Sea anemones have the miraculous ability to repair themselves after they have been torn in half.

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