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2b: Contextual Inquiry
Group: Sound Exposure

Potential Users:

One major problem area that we would like to investigate is that many people are exposed to moderately high levels of noise each day, and unknowingly causing significant damage to their hearing over time. People who work in exceedingly noisy environments (eg. construction works, airplane mechanics, etc.) are required to wear hearing protection. However, those who work in *moderately* noisy environments throughout the day (eg. waiters, public transportation operators, stewardesses, factory workers, etc.) often do not wear hearing protection even though they are at risk given their exposure to noise over extended periods. To gain a better understanding of whether this target group is at a risk, how severe the risk is, and whether they are concerned or doing anything to mitigate their risk, we will undergo a contextual inquiry within any industry that fits this description.

Field Study:

This will likely include visiting worksites, measuring sound levels, and talking with people whose job requires extended exposure to moderate noise levels. Individual interviews will give us an opportunity to understand whether those at risk are 1) aware they are at risk and 2) doing anything to mitigate their risk. By measuring sound levels and asking/observing how much exposure individuals experience throughout a typical day, we can extrapolate to infer likely risk levels. Interviews will also give us a sense of whether individuals in this target group would be interested and/or benefit from a noise exposure tracking tool, which could help them manage and protect against harmful noise exposure.