

# University of Pretoria partners with Vodacom to launch hearZA App

This week saw the launch in South Africa of a National Hearing Test for World Hearing Day. The hearZA App, developed and validated by the University of Pretoria, will provide users with a free hearing test courtesy of Vodacom for recognising the importance of this course by funding 112,500 tests for South Africans.



Vuyani Jarana, chief officer at Vodacom Business says, “At Vodacom we have always believed in the centrality of ICT in delivering effective healthcare in Africa. This partnership highlights Vodacom’s commitment to support health accessibility through mobile health (mHealth) applications.”

In South Africa, undisclosed hearing loss has far reaching consequences including communication difficulties, fatigue, and a higher risk of depression and dementia.

Prof De Wet Swanepoel, lead-inventor of hearZA, the downloadable Android and iOS application, confirms that “more than three million South Africans suffer from permanent disabling hearing loss.”

## Encouraging health awareness

The smartphone-based National Hearing Test is the first of its kind. Prof Swanepoel adds: “this will not only provide accurate testing but it will encourage hearing health awareness through a gamified user-experience”.

Early detection with hearZA can ensure better hearing for better living. Persons identified with a hearing problem will be linked based on geolocation to their closest hearing health care providers.

This initiative has also seen professional audiology societies such as SAAA & SASLHA partner to provide assistance with hearing healthcare providers' locations in different areas.

In support of World Hearing Day, 18 persons identified with a disabling hearing loss using the hearZA App will be sponsored for an audiological evaluation and hearing aids. Hearing aids are donated by Sivantos, Oticon and the Ear Institute.

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