

By JES BURNS

Oregon Public Broadcasting

“Bah.”

“Pah.”

Catch-22

“And I realized that every time some-



Jes Burns/Oregon Public Broadcasting

"It's exciting when you can take something that's really basic science, like how do owls figure out where sounds are coming from? What's the computer circuitry in the brain that does that? And all of a sudden, to take a technique that was refined

**BALA'S NEW
TEST RELIES ON
AN INVOLUNTARY
PUPIL RESPONSE,
ONE THAT IS
TRIGGERED WHEN
HUMANS HEAR A
NEW SOUND.
IT'S A REACTION
HE FIGURED OUT IN
AN UNLIKELY WAY
— WHILE HE WAS
STUDYING OWLS.**

It's standard practice in the United States to screen babies for hearing loss within the first month of life. Infants who are flagged for potential hearing issues are sent for further testing, but the tests audiologists use aren't the same "tell-us-if-you-hear-the-sound" tests older children and adults use.

“Research has shown that the first six

And if COVID-19 allows, Bala says he hopes to start real-world testing the new baby hearing test at Doernbecher's in Portland early next year.

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