**DESCRIPTION OF DUTCH TINNITUS COHORT: INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHICS ON TINNITUS SEVERITY**

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**Background:**   
Tinnitus is the perception of a sound in the absence of an audible external source, prevalent in up to 15% of the general population. A smaller group, 2.4% of the population, experience severe chronic complaints with a large impact on several aspects of daily life (1, 2).

It has been shown that tinnitus sufferers have a higher lifetime prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders (3, 4, 5). To date little is known about the underlying pathophysiology of tinnitus and as a consequence no curative treatment is available. Current therapies mostly focus on treating the distress caused by the tinnitus sound instead of reducing the actual phantom sound (3). Most research focuses on the effect of tinnitus on daily life. Interestingly, little is known about the natural progression of tinnitus and the factors that influence this progression such as life events and perceived hearing ability.

**Aims:**

This study describes the demographic characteristics of a Dutch cohort of tinnitus patients who sought clinical help. This study concerns the baseline measurement of a longitudinal study where the relations between the demographic characteristics and tinnitus severity are investigated. In the future, these factors may be of importance when making decisions concerning the optimization of personalized care.

**Methods:**    
This is a cohort study, which assesses several aspects of the natural progression of tinnitus over time using an online questionnaire (Qualtrics software). The questionnaire includes questions about demographics, tinnitus severity, physical and psychological wellbeing and quality of life. The study was approved by the medical ethics board of the Maastricht University Medical Centre (2019-1413). Inclusion started in July 2020.

**Results**

Here we describe the characteristics of the persons included at baseline measurement (n = 453). The demographics are described and related to tinnitus severity. Most interestingly an effect of gender and education level on tinnitus severity was observed, which may have implications for clinical practice. Additionally, feelings of depression and sleep problems were related to tinnitus severity.

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