THE IMPACT OF GENDER, AGE AND HEARING LOSS ON TINNITUS SEVERITY

Paticia Ciminelli, MD1,2, Tanit Sanchez, MD, PhD; Shiro Tomita, MD, PhD1,2
1Rio de Janeiro Federal University, 2Department of Otolaryngology, University Hospital

ABSTRACT

Tinnitus is a symptom present in approximately 15% of the world population. Tinnitus can occur at any age, but most of the patients who complain of tinnitus have between 40 and 80 years old. In this context, it can cause significant quality of life issues for some patients. Approximately 90% of tinnitus patients have some degree of hearing loss. The presence of hearing loss is a common factor in the occurrence of tinnitus. Tinnitus can have a moderate to severe impact in 20% of patients with tinnitus. The symptom is very common in the 15% of the population, and the degree of hearing loss on tinnitus severity is not completely known. The objective of this study is to evaluate the relationship between age, gender and hearing loss on tinnitus severity.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Sixty eight patients were evaluated at the Otolaryngology Department of Rio de Janeiro Federal University Hospital, from march 2007 to march 2008, with a detailed interview, complete otolaryngological examination, the Portuguese version of the Tinnitus Handicap Inventory and pure tone audiometry. Results: Age varied from 24 to 83 (mean=59); the mean THI value was 39 (females: 36; males: 44). THI grades were: slight: 32.3%, mild: 19.1%; moderate: 20.8%; severe: 13.2% and catastrophic: 14.7%. No significant correlation was found between gender (p=0.30), age (p=0.77), hearing loss (p>0.05 for all averages analysed) and tinnitus severity. Conclusion: Gender, age and hearing loss do not influence tinnitus severity, using the THI.

RESULTS

Slightly sixty eight patients were included in the study. 27 (39.7%) male and 41 (60.3%) female. The age varied from 24 to 83 with a mean of 59. The mean value for the THI was 39. The THI value for the female gender was 36 and for the male 44, with no significant difference between gender. The THI grades obtained were divided in: slight: 22 patients (32.3%); mild: 13 patients (19.1%); moderate: 14 patients (20.6%); severe: 9 patients (13.2%) and catastrophic: 10 patients (14.7%). Forty one patients presented with bilateral tinnitus (60.3%) and 27 (39.7%) with a unilateral complaint. Correlation between gender and THI value: The Wilcoxon test (rank of sums) was used to establish this relationship. There was not statistically significant difference between gender and THI (p=0.30).

CONCLUSIONS

According to the instruments selected in this study, we conclude that the patient’s gender, age and degree of hearing loss does not influence tinnitus severity. There was no statistically significant difference between gender and THI and hearing loss does not influence tinnitus severity, using the THI.

REFERENCES


P value for correlations between THI and averages obtained in the audiology testing.

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