Is the Pitch and Loudness Associated with the Tinnitus Annoyance?

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INTRODUCTION

Tinnitus is not characterized as a disease but as a symptom. Tinnitus affects about 10-15% of Americans in general and 33% of people above 65 years of age. The subjective tinnitus - perceived only by the patient - is the most prevalent and is associated with some hearing loss in 80-90% of the cases and also affects the quality of life due to its annoyance.

The audiological evaluation of tinnitus can be done by acufenometry, exam that studies its psychoacoustic characteristics.

OBJECTIVES

Verify if there is an association between tinnitus pitch and loudness and degree of annoyance

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Transversal study involving 129 consecutives patients with unilateral disturbing tinnitus between September 2003 and December 2011. The tinnitus pitch and loudness was measured by acufenometry. The impact of tinnitus in patient’s quality of life was evaluates using both tinnitus handicap inventory (THI) and visual analog scale (VAS) at the same time when acufenometry was performed. Statistical analysis was performed using the Pearson correlation test.

RESULTS

The mean age was 57.7 ± 12.6 years old and 62.8% were female. The correlation coefficient between loudness and VAS was R= 0.2 (P = 0.03) (graph 1) and between loudness and THI was R=0.16 (P=0.07) (graph 2). When we analysed the pitch and VAS, R was -0.02 (P=0.7) (graph 3) and between pitch and THI the R was 0.08 (P=0.3) (graph 4).

CONCLUSIONS

There are no significant associations between either the tinnitus pitch and loudness and the symptom’s impact in the patient’s quality of life.

REFERENCES