Finally, a prescription for tinnitus relief.

Zen. From Widex.

An estimated 50 million Americans are affected with ringing in the ears known as tinnitus.

The unique ZEN hearing aid feature – which has been shown in a clinical study to demonstrate promise in the treatment of tinnitus – is now available in all CLEAR hearing instruments.

Indications for Use: The ZEN Program is intended to provide a relaxing sound background for adults (21 years and older) who desire to listen to such a background in quiet. It may be used as a sound therapy tool in a tinnitus treatment program that is prescribed by a licensed hearing healthcare professional (audiologists, hearing aid specialists, otolaryngologists) who is trained in tinnitus management.
Office of Naval Research Funds Nearly $2 Million in Tinnitus Research

By Jennifer Born, ATA Director of Public Affairs, Editor, Tinnitus Today

ATA has worked diligently to increase federal funding for tinnitus research over the past six years. Our three-pronged approach has encouraged the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Department of Defense (DoD) to work collaboratively in advancing the science and treatment of tinnitus.

The Department of Defense has rapidly increased their spending on tinnitus research and become a major funding player, mostly due to the extreme increases in tinnitus in personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. One particular entity of DoD that has been especially attentive to the issue of tinnitus is the Office of Naval Research (ONR). In addition to having a specific Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Program (NIHL), ONR helped fund the Fifth International Tinnitus Research Initiative Conference held in Buffalo, NY in 2005 and the recently in partnership with the U.S. Army, funded two large tinnitus research grants to very deserving investigators.

Former ATA Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair, Richard Salvi, Ph.D., and current SAC member Donald Caspary, Ph.D., are the recipients of the two grants outlined below and combined, received approximately $1,883,000 for their research projects. ONR also granted funds outlined below and combined, received approximately $1,883,000 for their research projects. ONR also granted funds to very deserving investigators.

Richard Salvi, Ph.D.
New York State University at Buffalo

“Tinnitus Susceptibility, Chronic Stress and Drug Therapy.”

Proposed Research: Blastwave exposure and continuous noise are the major causes of tinnitus among combat personnel returning from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Previous epidemiological studies have suggested that chronic stress can exacerbate noise-induced tinnitus. Our working hypothesis is that chronic restraint stress plus noise exposure will significantly increase the likelihood of developing tinnitus over blastwave or continuous noise alone.

No drugs are currently approved to treat tinnitus. In a recent drug screen, we identified a potassium channel modulator that suppressed drug-induced tinnitus presumably by reducing neural excitability. Our working hypothesis is that this potassium channel modulator will also suppress tinnitus and auditory cortex hyper-excitability induced by blastwave or continuous noise exposure. These studies are designed to identify factors that contribute to the induction of noise-induced tinnitus and drugs that may be used to treat tinnitus.

Donald Caspary, Ph.D.
Southern Illinois University

“A Novel GABAAR Receptor Subtype in Auditory Thalamus: A Potential New Target for Tinnitus Treatment”

Proposed Research: Noise exposure is the most common cause of tinnitus and the Naval working environment presents many challenging high-noise situations. Naval noise levels can be so intense that standard hearing protection is not adequate. A developing hypothesis suggests that dysfunction of inhibitory neurotransmission within the central nervous system circuits may underpin chronic human neuropathies, including tinnitus and chronic pain.

All proposed studies will compare control animals (rats) with animals showing behavioral evidence of tinnitus as indicated by a noise exposure gap/startle model of tinnitus. Studies will examine tinnitus-related pre- and postsynaptic changes in the inhibitory systems of the auditory thalamus. Findings from these studies in auditory thalamus should enhance our understanding of the role of GABA neurotransmission in the development of tinnitus and aid in the development of an effective drug therapy.

Tinnitus is generally described as the perception of sound in the absence of an external sound. When tinnitus is perceived, the reports of the sound vary tremendously from ringing to whooshing to pulsing to even chirping, and the location of the tinnitus can vary from the head to the ears. Some of these sounds are measured in decibels. For example, tinnitus accompanied by a pulsing feeling in your ear(s) could be from an arterial blockage, and unilateral whooshing/whooshing (along with unilateral hearing loss and vertigo) could lead us to certain diseases as the underlying cause of types of tinnitus. However, there are numerous areas where the tinnitus can arise from.

Without looking extensively at your medical history, it would be difficult to attribute a specific cause to your chirping. I would highly recommend finding a tinnitus professional nearby and getting evaluated.

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