

## Tinnitus Linked To Insomnia

Written by Grace Rattue on April 24, 2012

Researchers at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit have found a significant association between the severity of perceived **tinnitus symptoms** and **insomnia**.

According to the researchers, over 36 million people experience **tinnitus – chronic ringing, buzzing, hissing or clicking in the head and ears**. The study, presented at the Combined Otolaryngological Spring Meetings in San Diego, found that **insomnia** can worsen the functional and emotional toll of **tinnitus** symptoms and that patients suffering from insomnia reported greater emotional distress.

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Study co-author Kathleen L. Yaremchuk, M.D., Chair, Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery at Henry Ford, explained:

“Tinnitus involves cognitive, emotional, and psycho-physiological processes, which can result in an increase in a patient’s distress. Sleep complaints, including insomnia, in these patients may result in a decrease in their tolerance to tinnitus.”

Although researchers do not know the exact physiological cause of tinnitus, there are several conditions which trigger or worsen it:

- Ear or sinus infections

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- Exposure to loud noises
- [Lyme disease](#)
- Thoracic outlet syndrome
- Hypo- or [hyperthyroidism](#)
- [Fibromyalgia](#)

In addition, earlier studies have found a strong link between various psychological disturbances and tinnitus.

In this retrospective study, Dr. Yaremchuk, Dr. George Miguel, and colleagues examined 117 patients who received treatment at Henry Ford between 2009 and 2011.

The team collected patient data via telephone and written interviews by using the Tinnitus Reaction Questionnaire (TRQ) and the Insomnia Severity Index scales (ISI). The TRQ determines the emotional effects tinnitus has had on a person's lifestyle and general well-being, whilst the ISI is a short screening measure for insomnia.

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Results from the study showed that severity of TRQ was a good predictor of insomnia and in predicting group association, especially the “emotional” subscore component (specificity 55.3% and sensitivity 96.9%



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The researchers found that the more a patient experienced insomnia the more severe their complaints regarding tinnitus were.

Dr. Yaremchuk explains:

“Treating patients with tinnitus is challenging. A chronic tinnitus patient presents a challenging clinical picture that may include

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distress. And one of most frequent self-reported complaints of tinnitus patient is 'getting to sleep.'"

In addition, results from the study provide further evidence that the severity of tinnitus symptoms may be reduced by assessing and treating patients with tinnitus suffering from insomnia.

The study received funding from Henry Ford Hospital.

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In addition to Drs. Yaremchuk and Miguel, Henry Ford co-authors are Christopher Drake, Ph.D.; Thomas Roth, Ph.D.; and Ed Peterson, Ph.D.

Written By Grace Rattue

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