



Preface

Tinnitus: Clinical, Basic Science, Audiologic and Industry Updates



Carol A. Bauer, MD



Didier Depireux, PhD



Ronna Hertzano, MD, PhD

Editors

Tinnitus, the perception of sound without an external source, is a phenomenon that interests people from many backgrounds and disciplines. In the United States, it is estimated that 30 million adults experience tinnitus on a daily basis, and for upward of 5% of them, the experience is severely disruptive and negatively impacts quality of life. Therefore, there are many individuals with tinnitus who may benefit from this issue by learning what is currently known about tinnitus cause and treatments. Although *Otolaryngologic Clinics of North America* issues are geared primarily for physicians and other auditory/neural health care providers, the material herein can be accessed effectively by patients, either directly or as communicated by their hearing health professional.

Tinnitus treatment begins with the very first interaction a patient has with their provider, whether they are a primary care physician, an advanced practice nurse or physician's assistant, an audiologist, or an otolaryngologist head and neck surgeon. Many providers are frequently frustrated when evaluating patients with tinnitus and are uncertain when determining how to evaluate and select the best treatment approach for the individual. While tinnitus is one of the most frequent symptoms experienced by patients who present to the office of an otolaryngologist, the pathophysiology of tinnitus and its treatments are not routinely taught or tested as part of the official training in Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery. Not surprisingly, patients are frustrated and disturbed when they are told as a blanket statement that there is no cure or treatment for them, and they must learn to live with their tinnitus.

This issue is not a "how I do it" manual, but a collection of what is currently known about tinnitus from a variety of perspectives. As such, we hope it will serve as a resource and guide for patients and practitioners alike. Each article provides a clear summary on a specific aspect of tinnitus, including basic science theories and research techniques, genetics and heritability, and a review of the impact of damaging

noise and how it relates to tinnitus. Also included are practical reviews of the role of alternative or complementary medicine and current evidence for the 3 broad areas of traditional tinnitus treatment approaches: sound therapy, behavioral therapy, and pharmacologic therapy. Finally, a summary of the factors that are barriers in the field frames promising areas for research to unravel the mechanisms of tinnitus and leverage that information into development of new therapeutics.

The *Otolaryngologic Clinics of North America* last published an issue dedicated to tinnitus in 2003. Dr Aristides Sismanis organized and edited a superb collection that is a classic in the tinnitus field. The articles on the patient's perspective (Dr Stephen M. Nagler) and the relationship between depression and tinnitus (Dr Robert A. Dobie) are timeless and well worth reading.

It is self-evident that patients benefit from well-informed clinicians and the expert knowledge they utilize when providing care. This issue provides the clinician with an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of the subject. It is our hope that this work will form a solid foundation for practitioners interested in knowing more about tinnitus. We also hope this issue will be of benefit to patients and will inspire continued research to advance the field.

Carol A. Bauer, MD
 Department of Otolaryngology Head
 and Neck Surgery
 Southern Illinois University School of Medicine
 720 N. Bond Street, Springfield, IL 62702, USA

Didier Depireux, PhD
 Chief Scientific Officer, OtolithLabs
 1875 Connecticut Avenue
 Washington, DC 20009, USA

Department of Otorhinolaryngology
 Head and Neck Surgery
 University of Maryland
 School of Medicine
 Baltimore, MD 21201, USA

Ronna Hertzano, MD, PhD
 Department of Otolaryngology
 Head and Neck Surgery
 Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology
 Institute for Genome Sciences
 University of Maryland School of Medicine
 16 South Eutaw Street, Suite 500
 Baltimore, MD 21201, USA

E-mail addresses:
cbauer@siumed.edu (C.A. Bauer)
depireux@gmail.com (D. Depireux)
rhertzano@som.umaryland.edu (R. Hertzano)