

An Introduction to the British Tinnitus Association, by David Stockdale, CEO

In September, we welcomed the Chief Executive of the British Tinnitus Association (BTA) to our meeting. Mr Stockdale gave a very helpful talk on the BTA's history, its aims and the main ways in which the organisation can support people with tinnitus.

The BTA was established in Sheffield in 1979 to give a collective 'voice' to local tinnitus groups. The Association employs a small number of people, and is supported by a panel of Professional Advisors, including ENT surgeons, audiologists and researchers.

The BTA offers support in following ways:

- Production of a quarterly magazine, Quiet
- Helpline (0800 018 0527) staffed 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday - this gets an average of 6000 calls a year, and the staff manning the lines have a combined 70 years of experience in the field
- Selling equipment, such as masking devices
- Information leaflets (around 30 topics), available to download or receive by post for free (to BTA members)

The BTA seeks to raise awareness of tinnitus in the following ways:

- 3 Free Tinnitus Information Days a year, combining talks, workshops and exhibitions
- Attendance at professional exhibitions and local events
- Tinnitus Advisor Training Courses to provide group leaders with the skills and knowledge to run a support group
- Tinnitus Awareness Week - run in February every year

The BTA funds research into the causes, treatment and prevention of tinnitus. Recent / current research includes:

- The impact of tinnitus on auditory pathways
- Serotonin levels and their impact on levels of tinnitus-related distress
- Cannabinoids as a tinnitus suppressant
- CBT and a cognitive model for tinnitus
- Young people and attitudes to loud noise/music
- Mindfulness

The Marie and Jack Shapiro Prize for research is awarded each year to the published paper presenting the results of UK based research that is 'most likely to result in improved treatment or public awareness of tinnitus'.

Joining the BTA

Since David Stockdale's visit, I have received requests for information on how to join the BTA. Membership costs £15 per year. You can join online via the BTA website (www.tinnitus.org.uk) or by calling the helpline (number above).

Next TSG meeting

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 5 November 2014, starting at 2pm. This meeting will be an opportunity to take part in a facilitated discussion with other people who experience tinnitus. We are very fortunate to have Mike Horwood, Hearing Therapist at the James Paget Hospital as our expert for this session.

In order to make the most of our time together in November, we would like to know if you have any specific topics that you would like to bring to discuss. Please drop me a line using the email address at the bottom of this newsletter. We will also be asking the group what you feel would be most helpful from Audiology appointments (in relation to tinnitus management), and what you would like to see the NDA's TSG do in the future.

Please do take a few minutes to think about these topics and come prepared to share your thoughts and ideas. I look forward to seeing many of you for this discussion group.