

The Neuroscience of Tinnitus - Josephine Swinhoe.

At our November meeting, we welcomed the Managing Director of the Tinnitus Clinic London, Josephine Swinhoe. Josephine talked us through the various causes of tinnitus, possible treatments and then followed with a group Q&A session.

Possible causes - Tinnitus affects over 10% of the adult UK population. There are many triggers for tinnitus such as *physical damage* to the head or ear, exposure to *loud noise* or working in a *noisy environment* with no ear protection, *diseases to the ear* and *ear infections*, *side effects of medication* or a combination of these.

Unfortunately for us humans, we are the only type of animal whose hearing cannot repair itself. We are unable to regrow damaged hair cells once they are damaged

Josephine told us her tinnitus developed while she was pregnant. During pregnancy the body will go through some massive changes both physically and hormonally and it is these changes that can bring about the onset of tinnitus. In most cases the tinnitus will stop a short time after the arrival of the baby but in some cases it doesn't.

Every person who has tinnitus experiences it differently. It can be a high or low frequency, varying in volume, it can come and go or be constant, and the noise itself varies, whistling, buzzing, roaring or hissing and in some cases even music.



Possible treatments - The most common treatment for tinnitus is hearing aids. **Hearings aids** enrich what we hear and are most likely to reduce the tinnitus. The downside with using hearing aids for tinnitus treatment is that the tinnitus is still just

If you have any comments or questions regarding the Tinnitus Support Group, please contact:
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'carrying on'. Good forms of treatments use the combination aids which train the brain to deal with the tinnitus.

Acoustic Neuromodulation treats the cause rather than the symptoms. It's a small matchbox sized device which gives out four changing tones designed to be listened to 4-6 hours a day, maybe 2 in the morning and 2 in the evening, for example. (You can still perform your daily routine whilst listening to the prescribed tones). The treatment works to reduce the tinnitus volume and pitch which can make the tinnitus less noticeable over time.

Mindfulness and relaxation as we have learnt in previous sessions, can be very effective in tinnitus reduction. When we relax it impacts the limbic system which reduces tinnitus. Relaxation techniques can include just taking 5-10 minutes to stop what you are doing and concentrate on just breathing in and out or listening to a relaxation CD.

Josephine brought with her some information packs for the group. In these packs were leaflets about tinnitus, self help guides, some more in depth treatment information about Acoustic Neuromodulation and a relaxation CD. We still have a few of these packs left so if you would like a pack please do let us know.

Next TSG meeting

Details of the first two meetings for 2016 are below. We are arranging the TSG calendar for the rest of the year and we will send this out to you shortly once all details of the meetings are finalised.

Date	Event Title	Information
Thursday 14th January 6:30pm - 8:00pm	Sleep management for People with tinnitus	This talk will provide helpful advice and techniques on how to get a better night's sleep for people with tinnitus. Presented by Claire Gatenby, Chief Hearing Therapist from the Audiology Department of the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital.
Thursday 11th February, 6:30pm - 8:00pm	Relaxation and stress management for people with tinnitus	This talk will provide helpful advice and techniques on relaxation and stress management for people with tinnitus. Presented by Claire Gatenby, Chief Hearing Therapist from the Audiology Department of the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

Finally, on behalf of everyone here at the NDA, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

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