Tinnitus with temporomandibular joint disorders: a specific entity of tinnitus patients?

Vielsmeier V, Kleinjung T, Strutz J, Bürgers R, Kreuzer PM, Langguth B.

Source

Department of Otorhinolaryngology, University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany. veronika.vielsmeier@klinik.uni-regensburg.de

Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

Tinnitus is frequently associated with temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction. However, the nature of the relationship is not fully understood. Here the authors compared 30 patients with a confirmed diagnosis of temporomandibular joint dysfunction and tinnitus to a group of 61 patients with tinnitus but without any subjective complaints of TMJ dysfunction with respect to clinical and demographic characteristics.

STUDY DESIGN:

Case-control study.

SETTING:

Tertiary referral center.

SUBJECTS:

Tinnitus patients with and without TMJ dysfunction presenting at the Department of Prosthetic Dentistry and the Tinnitus Clinic at the University of Regensburg.

RESULTS:

Tinnitus patients with TMJ disorder had better hearing function (P < .0005), lower age (P = .001), and lower age at tinnitus onset (P = .002) and were more frequently female (P = .003). Their subjectively perceived tinnitus loudness was lower (P = .01), and more of them could modulate their tinnitus by jaw or neck movements (P = .001).

CONCLUSION:

Classical risk factors for tinnitus (age, male gender, hearing loss) are less relevant in tinnitus patients with TMJ disorder, suggesting a causal role of TMJ pathology in the generation and maintenance of tinnitus. Based on this finding, treatment of TMJ disorder may represent a causally oriented treatment strategy for tinnitus.