

Multidisciplinary management of a child with tinnitus

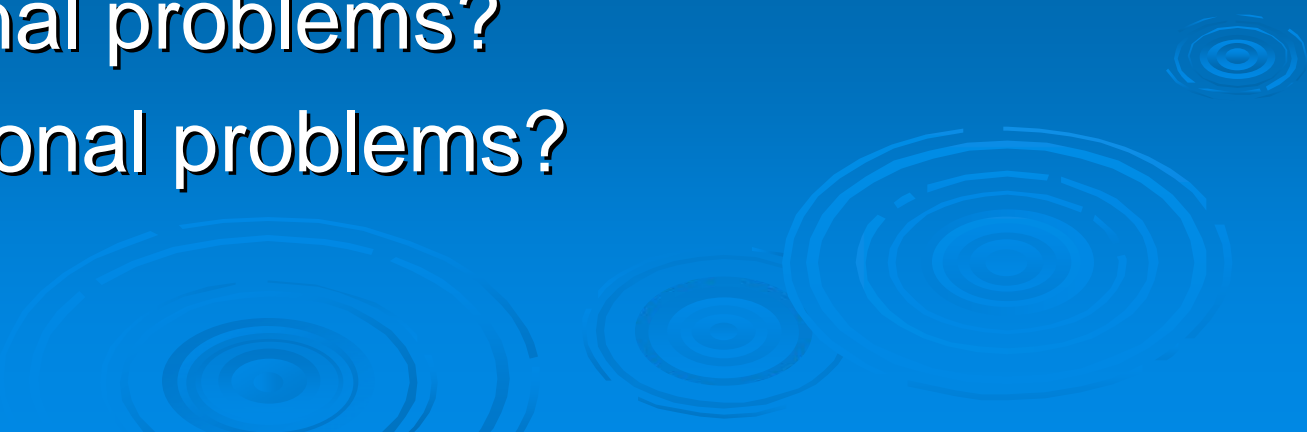
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Why multidisciplinary?

For effective treatment, tinnitus distress must be understood within the context:

- Of other difficulties (e.g. hearing loss educational, social difficulties)
- How does tinnitus affect the child's life?
- Do life events affect tinnitus severity?

Understanding tinnitus

- has tinnitus some function for the child?
Is there a maintaining factor?
 - What is the child's main problem in life?
 - Is it tinnitus?
 - Or emotional problems?
 - Or educational problems?
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Case study 1 - tinnitus

➤ 9 years old, normal hearing, rhinitis

“a train’s screeching breaks”

“ hard bouncing ball going across my head”

“Lasts a short while then goes. Hard to hear people’s voices”

worries about the noises – will they get worse?

Information from Mum

- Mum became aware of it at audiology appointment “ he just came out with it”
- In retrospect, thought it had been there since he started school

“He was always making a noise”

“uses clowning behaviour to get the noise out of his head”

“at home he used to whack his head”

“ In the playground he would hop around with his head on the side”

Noise sensitivity

- Friend shouting next to him
- Teacher shouting
- Station tannoys
- Building works at school
- Fireworks
- Unexpected noises

- Effect – give him a headache and make him feel anxious

- Normal LDL's

School

➤ Tinnitus distracts him



He distracts others



“shouted at” by teacher for not listening



e.g. teacher shouting- made him anxious

Factors associated with tinnitus

- Worsened by stress and tiredness
- Improved by relaxation, distracting him
- Mum asking him about the tinnitus (checking)

Coping Strategies:

- Doing things that make him feel happy
- Music at night, talks to teddies
- Talking to his mum, hugs from Mum
- Drinking water “to wash it away”
- Daydreaming
- If you tell the noises to go away they carry on for longer

Maintaining factors?

- Mum wondered if he used tinnitus to distract adults from telling him off e.g. for not doing homework
- “my ears hurt”
- “It’s giving me a headache”

Intervention

- Tinnitus counselling –Mum and child
 - List of coping strategies
 - Letter to school, outlining difficulties
 - Use of a yellow flag for time out from listening
 - Practice at telling his teacher he hasn't been able to hear, and asking for help
 - Sessions to discuss issues at home
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