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# Homoeopathy and Tinnitus

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## Summary:

Tinnitus, the perception of a ringing sound in the ears or head where no external source is present, is quite common. Sufferers are more or less disturbed, but some are so distraught, that they can even become suicidal. As a rule, Tinnitus is generally a harmless symptom and does not point to a serious underlying disease. An exception to this rule is the cerebellopontine angle tumour.

In most cases, homoeopathy by itself will not enable to keep Tinnitus under control. This is why it is especially important to inform the patient of the harmlessness of this suffering. Behavioural, therapeutical recommendations should be given and the patient must be advised on how to deal with Tinnitus. It is best not to try to focus on the perceived sounds, but rather those of surroundings in daily life. Tinnitus will disappear in most cases, but it may take a longer period of time, possibly even years. If the patient puts himself under pressure the symptomatic complex will inevitably get worse. It should be pointed out that therapeutical strategies such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, infusions with or without cortisone, or circulation stimulating agents (e.g. pentoxifylline) should not be considered under any circumstances.

A long-term homoeopathic treatment will often have a favourable effect. For one thing, consideration is given to constitutional issues, and for another the homoeopathic medicine will depend on the kind of Tinnitus. By questioning, the individual characteristics of the patient's Tinnitus should be well distinguished and treated accordingly. The cause as well is of importance, e.g. consequences of stress, mourning, infectious disease or other. The most frequent homoeopathic remedies used for Tinnitus in my practice are: Aconitum, Arnica, Coccus, Lycopodium, Lachesis, Caladium, Petroleum, Tarantula hispanica, Apis, Secale cornutum, Gelsemium, Hydrastis, Asarum and Theridion.

## Introduction

Tinnitus and 'ringing' in the ears are identical. This is often not clear to patients, who then might ask if these symptoms mean they are suffering from Tinnitus.

Tinnitus may have many causes, which should be addressed as soon as they are identified. They may include exposure to loud noise, drug treatment (aspirin, birth-control pill, ACE inhibitors, furosemid, antibiotics), nicotine, infections, dental fillings (amalgam, palladium), metabolic diseases (diabetes mellitus), mineral deficiency (zinc, magnesium), acoustic nerve neurinoma, stress, Ménière's disease, high or low blood pressure, hyperglobulinaemia, anaemia, serious neurological diseases, impacted cerumen (bagatelle!), sudden deafness, cervical spine syndrome, impacted wisdom teeth, inflammation of nasal sinuses and of the middle ear, chronic middle ear inflammation and impaired perfusion.

In an absolutely sound proof room, anyone will hear a ringing sound in the ears.

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This is completely normal. It is considered to be pathological if the ringing is felt to be abnormal and disturbing. According to different examinations the ringing inside the ears is as loud as a leaf falling from a tree, which means 1 dB (decibel). This volume is normally not perceivable. The problem is that the patient focuses all the attention on these sounds. He/she becomes annoyed and the ringing more intense, which ends in a vicious circle.

### **Informing the patient**

Many people are afraid that the ringing in the ears may be an early symptom of a serious disease like a heart attack or a stroke. But there is actually no reason to be afraid and patients should be calmed down. The only real dangerous cause is an acoustic nerve neurinoma, which can be excluded by an otorhinolaryngologist or by nuclear/magnetic resonance scanning. The patient should be informed that it is best to avoid silence. There should always be some sounds in his or her surroundings, that may drown the ringing. At night lying in bed the ringing may appear to become stronger and the patient will become agitated, which will activate the sympathetic nervous system and make it impossible to go to sleep. In turn, the ringing will become stronger.

Favourable are therapeutical steps such as Autogenous training, Yoga, Relaxation through Self-Hypnosis, Progressive Muscular Relaxation by Jacobsen

### **Therapies which should be avoided**

In traditional medicine there has been much debate on how Tinnitus should be treated. It should be taken into account, that some patients will see different doctors or seek advice from naturopaths. There is no sense in try-

ing to forbid patients to see other doctors, but you may make a point by mentioning that "too many cooks spoil the broth".

Perfusion stimulating infusions with HAES, with or without cortisone, should be avoided under all circumstances. Cortisone will have a negative impact on a homoeopathic treatment, side-effects are serious, and the benefit toward Tinnitus is questionable. Infusions in laboratory testing (in vitro) have lead to a worsening of blood circulation. An improvement has never been proved in traditional medicine either, so it is best not to treat with cortisone. The hyperbaric oxygen therapy may also lead to a worsening of Tinnitus. In my practice I have experienced many such cases. Treatment with pentoxifyllin has many side-effects and blood may be sucked out of the small ear artery (steal phenomenon).

Statements of the doctors such as: "Why haven't you come earlier?" have a very unfavourable influence on Tinnitus. With this statement the doctor or naturopath is suggesting that the patient cannot be treated, although it is really never too late. In this case it is better change the doctor immediately.

There are even worse statements, that regularly lead to the exacerbation of Tinnitus: "You will have to learn to live with it", implicating that the ringing will never go away. First of all this is not true and secondary this statement is not very constructive. It is difficult to anticipate how the Tinnitus will continue. The above statement may even be considered malpractice and I would advise to leave the doctor's office.

### **Favourable therapeutical procedures**

Acupuncture is not overly effective in respect to Tinnitus, even though it is popular. It may have a positive effect as a complementary therapy, but it is certainly not suitable as the only one. Remedies such as 'Ginkgo biloba' have a favourable influence on Tinnitus. The oxygen multistep therapy by Ardenne and other oxygen procedures (with exclusion of the hyperbaric oxygen-therapy) may be helpful. Holidays in the country side and clean fresh air, especially on an island or in the mountain is advisable. A visit to the island of Mallorca is especially known to be favourable.

Meditation can have a good effect on Tinnitus, as well as treatments from the far east such as Ayurveda or Traditional Chinese Medicine. All therapeutical procedures that have a balancing effect on the life rhythm are favourable.

Regarding dizziness related to the cervical spine physiotherapy gymnastics are indicated. A massage is not recommended, as it may worsen the symptoms.

Soft techniques for the cervical spine are also recommended and should be preferred over manipulative methods. If the haemoglobin level is increased a venesection may be considered. A blood donation may often serve the purpose.

### **Homoeopathic treatment**

Homoeopathic treatment is performed considering the patient's constitution as well as the pathologic findings. A liminal audiogram may sometimes lead directly to a certain homoeopathic medicine.

## Homoeopathy and Tinnitus

### Cocculus:

diagram 1 *Difficulties in hearing low-pitched tones*

Difficulties in hearing low-pitched tones are a stress indicator. This may be clarified during anamnesis. Teachers and single parents are often affected: they are subjectively exposed to more stress. These patients do not complain about their hearing impairment, but about pressure in their ears and of hearing a buzzing sound. Prognosis in these cases is very good.

### Arnica:

diagram 2 *Hearing loss at 4 khz.*

Arnica is a classic medicine for injuries. Hearing loss at 4 khz may occur due to a loud bang, a explosion trauma or chronic noise pollution. This type of hearing loss occurs frequently after going to a discotheque. Patients with this symptom hear a tone around C-5, which is very disturbing. Arnica may help to antagonize and the Tinnitus may disappear completely. Long-term therapy is likely and it is advisable to plan over a time period of over a year.

### Petroleum:

With Petroleum there is no typical liminal audiogram, but Tinnitus is a characteristic. The patients complain about a knocking sound similar to the heartbeat, sometimes even independently of it, a pulsation or an interrupted sound similar to that of a locomotive whistle. According to these modalities, treatment with Petroleum has a very good effect in most cases.

### Asarum:

With Asarum an over-sensitivity caused by noise and hyperacusia is dominant. These patients often have Tinnitus when there is a source of noise around them. In silence they do not hear any ringing. This is very conspicuous. If these modalities apply, treatment with Asarum is favourable in most cases.

### Theridion:

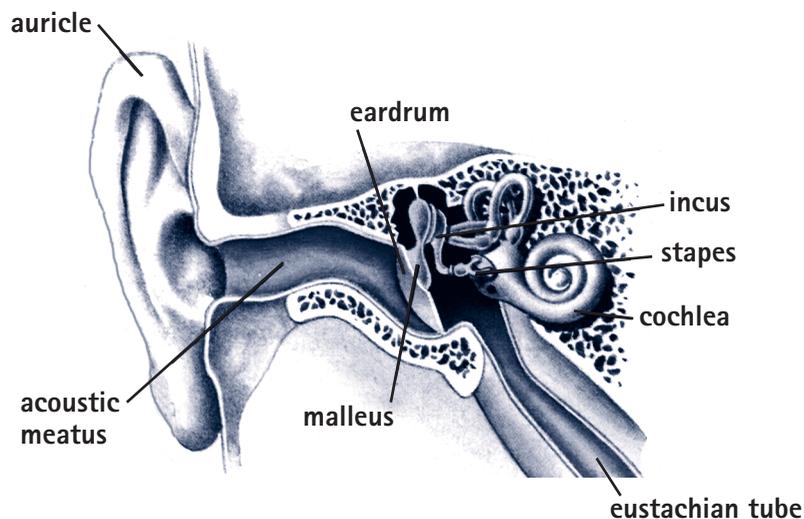
Here as well hyperacusis is dominant. But the patients are easy to recognize because of their complete restlessness. They keep crossing their legs, are always moving around and feel extremely stressed by noise, but not by music. They enjoy listening to music. Here as well the prognosis is very favourable.

### Apis mellifica:

Apis is indicated if the patients complain about a humming sound like that of bees. But this symptom should be spontaneously expressed by the patient and not be interrogated. Prognosis in these cases is very favourable.

### Hydrastis:

The patients that need Hydrastis have a typical 'machine-like' Tinnitus. Subjectively they have the impression of standing in the middle of a factory. In this case the prognosis is less favourable.



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### **Caladium:**

Nicotine abuse may lead to general arteriosclerosis and be a preliminary factor to Tinnitus. Most of the patients prefer to continue smoking and bear the Tinnitus, rather than to give up smoking. In this case it is possible to give Caladium, but the outlook is rather moderate.

### **Tarantula hispanica:**

Tarantula hispanica is a possibility when the more seldom objective Tinnitus occurs. Occasionally the patient is less disturbed by it than his or her partner might be. The sound is produced because of a tic, when the auditory ossicles are rubbed up against each other. This sound is perceivable for others. Prognosis with Tarantula hispanica in these cases is very good.

### **Aconitum napellus:**

Aconit is applied when the Tinnitus is in its first stage and has appeared very suddenly. In this case it is recommended to begin the treatment with Aconitum napellus. Later on the treatment should be continued with another remedy. In these cases it is especially recommended to give Gingko biloba additionally and in a high dosage.

### **Secale cornutum:**

Typical for patients needing Secale cornutum with Tinnitus is a disturbance of sensitivity inside the auditory canal. This modality is observed rather rarely. Secale may be an option also in elderly patients who suffer from general arteriosclerosis. This kind of Tinnitus is frequently perceived in both ears or "in the head". A long-term prognosis is rather uncertain.

### **Gelsemium:**

Patients who need Gelsemium usually suffer from a cervical spine syndrome. Importantly the case history will include pains in the neck and forehead. Less significant are X-rays, which actually do not provide any information. When the cervical spine is the cause of Tinnitus, Gelsemium is very favourable. These patients may also profit from acupuncture.

### **Ignatia:**

Ignatia is indicated, if there is a psychological cause involved. It is the classic remedy for sorrows par excellence. Ignatia is especially relevant when hearing is normal. These patients spontaneously speak about the circumstances leading to Tinnitus because they can see a connection.

### **Lycopodium:**

An essential criterion for Lycopodium is that distress is experienced on the right side of the body and that the patients tend to make a mountain out of a molehill. This symptom is actually very frequent in Tinnitus patients. They are usually well educated and want to get rid of their Tinnitus as fast as possible. With the relating modalities, these patients will be cured, but not so fast. This must be clearly communicated. It is also important that the patient does not brag about the Tinnitus, which tends to make it worse. Unfortunately this behaviour can be observed quite frequently.

### **Lachesis:**

Lachesis is a classic remedy for left-sided Tinnitus. Patients make themselves noticed with a flood of words and do not like heat. They already show up at the doctor's red in the face and feel very seriously ill because of their Tinnitus.

You could imagine that Lachesis could be applied for these symptoms, because if bitten by a bushmaster, Tinnitus would also disappear rapidly. This, of course, is not meant to be a hint.

### **Natrium muriaticum:**

Sometimes, but usually quite seldom, there are Natrium muriaticum patients with Tinnitus, who understate the symptoms. These patients are disturbed by their Tinnitus mostly during midday and hardly suffer from it at night. Other criteria of Natrium muriaticum should also apply.

If you have a look at 'Gesichtete homöopathische Arzneimittellehre by Julius Mezger', practically under every remedy you can find Tinnitus as a modality. This doesn't get us very far. In Kent (Kent III, page 119-133) there is a large chapter on noises inside the ear. However, there are almost too many remedies listed.

I have pointed out the essential remedies for Tinnitus that are used in my practice. These are by far not all, but may account for 90% of cases.

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