

Progressive Tinnitus Management

Clinical Handbook for Audiologists



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This volume was prepared for educational use by the Veterans Health Administration. The focus of the information is to provide guidelines for VA audiologists to conduct the method of Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM) with Veteran patients. In general, VA endorses the method of PTM.

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Contents

Foreword	vii
Introduction	ix
Acknowledgments	xii
Authors and Contributors	xiii
1 Definitions and Background	1
2 Research Leading to PTM	11
3 Overview of PTM	21
4 Level 1 Triage	35
5 Level 2 Audiologic Evaluation	39
6 Sound Tolerance Evaluation and Management (STEM)	51
7 Level 3 Group Education	57
8 Level 4 Interdisciplinary Evaluation	67
9 Level 5 Individualized Support	77
References	85
Appendixes	
A PTM Flowchart	95
B Tinnitus Triage Guidelines	97
C Overview of Objectives and Procedures of the Level 2 Audiologic Evaluation	99
D Tinnitus and Hearing Survey	101
E What to Do When Everyday Sounds Are Too Loud	103
F Tinnitus Handicap Inventory	105
G Hearing Handicap Inventory—Screening Version	109
H Tinnitus Problem Checklist	111
I Flowchart for Assessment and Fitting of Ear-Level Instruments	113
J Level 2 Audiologic Evaluation: Special Considerations for Hearing Aids	115
K Sound Tolerance Interview	117
L Sound Tolerance Worksheet	121
M Loudness Discomfort Levels—Clinical Guide	123
N Sound Plan Worksheet	125
O Relief Scale	127
P Attention Scale	129

Q Tinnitus Contrast Activity	131
R Level 4 Interdisciplinary Evaluation: Tinnitus Interview	133
S Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)	137
T The Primary Care PTSD Screening Tool (PC-PTSD)	139
U Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS)	141
V Level 4 Interdisciplinary Evaluation: Guide to Trial Use of Ear-Level Instruments	143
W Level 4 Interdisciplinary Evaluation: In-Clinic Trial Use of Hearing Aids	145
X Level 4 Interdisciplinary Evaluation: In-Clinic Trial Use of Combination Instruments	147
Y Level 4 Interdisciplinary Evaluation: In-Clinic Trial Use of Noise Generators	149
DVD and CD information	151
Index	153

Also Included:

DVD: "Managing Your Tinnitus" (for Level 3 group viewing)

CD: PowerPoint files (for Level 3 live presentations)



Foreword

Tinnitus can dramatically compromise quality of life, rendering some persons unable to function as happy, healthy, and productive human beings. Tinnitus is one of the most common health concerns among combat-injured military personnel and veterans, and a major health care problem within the VA system. Tinnitus is also a significant health issue in the general population. Each year debilitating tinnitus prompts millions of persons to seek help from health care providers. Unfortunately, the person with tinnitus often does not benefit from prompt and appropriate care from physicians and other health care providers. Although effective tinnitus management techniques do exist, and all persons with bothersome tinnitus can be helped, a systematic, logical, and efficient approach to this large-scale health care problem is desperately needed. The progressive tinnitus management (PTM) method described in the new three-book Plural bundle offers such a solution.

The information within the three PTM books is evidence-based and clinically-proven. The strategy for assessment and management of tinnitus contained within the three books is consistent with the accumulated clinical experiences of audiologists who provide services to persons with bothersome tinnitus. In the words of the authors, PTM “utilizes a hierarchical structure for providing clinical services. That is, patients receive services that ‘progress’ to higher levels only as needed.” For many (perhaps most) prospective patients, timely and accurate information about tinnitus coupled with rather generic counseling will allay their concerns and prevent the need for more extensive (and expensive) intervention. At the other end of the tinnitus seriousness spectrum are patients with disabling tinnitus and, often, complex health and

audiologic histories including significant management challenges such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This relatively small proportion of patients will require highly specialized and individualized support and management.

The authors of the three books—three audiologists and one psychologist—draw on years of research and clinical experience with tinnitus assessment and management in the development of the PTM approach. Readers are probably already familiar with the authors’ peer-reviewed publications on tinnitus. James Henry, PhD is a VA Research Career Scientist at the National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR). Tara Zaugg, AuD is a research audiologist at the NCRAR. Paula Myers, PhD is Chief of the Audiology Section and Cochlear Implant Coordinator at the James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa, Florida. Caroline Kendall, PhD is a research psychologist at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System in West Haven Connecticut.

Multiple unique features of the three PTM books contribute importantly to their clinical usefulness. The first book of the bundle is a clinical handbook on PTM written for audiologists. The components of the progressive tinnitus management approach are thoroughly explained in nine chapters. Clinical implementation of PTM is facilitated with 25 appendices containing a variety of practical materials such as patient handouts, questionnaires, and procedural guides. The handbook also includes a clinically valuable CD with informational PowerPoint presentations plus a DVD containing videos for patients containing, for example, demonstrations of different relaxation techniques. The second book is a guide for one-on-one counseling of patients with tinnitus. In the management of bothersome tinnitus and hyperacusis

(reduced sound tolerance), patient counseling is an essential and very effective component of intervention. The 300-page counseling guidebook is designed and formatted to be used directly in the counseling process, literally interfacing the audiologist with the patient. The counseling book also includes a 75-minute audio CD with a variety of sound tracks to demonstrate different types of sounds that can be used for managing reactions to tinnitus.

Consistent with the clinically proven adage that “knowledge is power,” the third book is a self-help workbook written for the person with tinnitus. The workbook provides step-by-step instructions to facilitate learning how to self-manage reactions to tinnitus. It also includes information on hearing protection, relaxation exercises, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and 10 appendices chock full

of additional practical information prepared for the patient. The self-help workbook will be very useful to augment the services provided by audiologists, and also will be invaluable for patients who, for various reasons, cannot directly access the services of an audiologist.

The three PTM books, with varied accompanying educational materials, provide a remarkably creative and comprehensive solution for the health care problem of tinnitus in both the VA and non-VA patient populations. Most audiologists regularly encounter patients who require a compassionate and evidence-based approach for diagnosis and intervention for bothersome tinnitus. Within the PTM book series is all the information and materials an audiologist needs to provide effective clinical services to this traditionally underserved patient population.

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