



TINNITUS! Buzzing in the Ear

Often tinnitus is a very common symptom that is felt in pregnant women and after the delivery process. What is tinnitus and how can we treat it? Osteopathic Physicians often see patients who have health issues that don't have a specific medical or organic problem. One of these is Tinnitus, a ringing sensation in the ear.

We need to explain a bit the anatomy in order to understand the dysfunction. The ear has two important muscles:

1-The tensor tympani (it attaches to the ear drum, and stabilizes it from the excess vibration caused by loud sounds).

2-The tensor levi palatini (it attaches to the Eustachian tube, and helps to open and close the tube, thereby equalizing pressure within the inner ear, it is what gives that popping sound when you are on an airplane).

Both of these muscles can become irritated from multiples origins, some of them are well established (physical origins) and others are supposedly suggested (physiological origins and neural origin):

- **Physiological origins:** Fatigue, stress, digestive problems, renal weakness (caused by diabetes), engorged liver... will induce a deficiency in the auditory system and provoke parasite sounds called tinnitus.

- **Neural origin:** the brain following multiple sounds aggressions react in a exaggerated way of self-protection the same way as the "Phantom

Limb Syndrome" where the patient still feels pains after many years of his limb amputation. So, the brain will induce multiple parasite sounds and tinnituses without any loss of hearing. These dysfunctions disturb much the private and professional life of the patient.

- **Physical Origins:** Pressure on the mid-ear or the auditory nerve: inflammation, circulatory problems, muscle compression, nervous compressions, vertebral blockage, hyperacusis...

Two major mechanisms have to be memorized:

1- A specific osteopathic examination by an Osteopathic Physician will detect a vertebral blockage in the upper neck responsible of muscular tensions causing tinnitus. In some cases, loud sounds can themselves provoke muscle stiffness in the ear by a protective reaction of the ear in order to avoid any internal damage thus inducing muscles tensions and vertebral blockage that will lead to tinnitus. The mechanism is often the same; a conflict between the vascular, nervous pack and the muscular complex system of the ear, neck and the base of the skull. **In this case, OMT (Osteopathic Manipulative Techniques) should be done!**

2- Disequilibrium, abnormal or excessive TMJ (jaw) movement, leading to a development of Tinnitus. There are also important embryological connections with the muscles used to open the jaw (lateral pterygoids) and the inner ear itself.

What does all this mean?

Well there are important links between the musculature and neurology of the ear and, from one side, the vertebrae of the neck and the other side the jaw. Using this understanding Osteopathic Physicians can focus their efforts in improving the function and movement of the neck's vertebrae, jaw and the bones of the skull (of which there are 28!) and this resolving (or at least reducing) any experience of tinnitus.

This same anatomical and neurological understanding can be applied with people suffering from unexplained vertigo (often caused by a disruption of the inner ear mechanisms) – all of which can be helped by ensuring the efficient movement of the jaw and bones of the skull.

N.B: the therapist must be a Medical Doctor to remove any organic problem and to refer to an E.N.T colleague if needed. It is a **MUST** to eliminate any other medical reason and so, avoid any major complication or delay in the treatment.

Therefore, it is especially recommended in Lebanon that the patient verifies at the LOP (Lebanese Order of Physicians) that the pretending therapist is a confirmed Medical doctor and this only for a unique purpose; their own health.

Visit at the doctor's clinic:

T.B, 32 yrs old, secretary, pregnant.

T.B., secretary, pregnant, stressed, had a car accident many months ago with an episode of neck pain as well as headaches. She was treated by conventional drugs (antalgics and myorelaxants). She visited again her Physician few weeks ago for a tinnitus that are disturbing her daily life and making her pregnancy even more difficult. Her General Practitioner referred her to an E.N.T specialist which in turn has examined her and decided not to prescribe any drug since there is no organic problem in the ear and plus that she is pregnant. Unfortunately, T.B. still suffered from tinnitus and she was starting to get depressed! On a friend's advice, she consulted an Osteopathic Physician who found a vertebral blockage in the second cervical vertebrae (neck), she was treated by two sessions of OMT (Osteopathic Manipulative Techniques) and tinnitus was completely treated.



Elie MALEK MD,DOM
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Member of the French Professional Association For
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Training Monitor at the French Academy for
Post-Graduate Training for
Osteopathic Physicians - Paris