

## **Efficacy of deactivation of myofascial trigger points in tinnitus patients: a double-blind placebo controlled randomized clinical trial**

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Although tinnitus remains a challenge, finding out its possible causes or influencing factors in each patient is critical to choose appropriate and personalized therapeutic strategies. As tinnitus may arise from many different disorders, it is not uncommon to find more than one cause in the same patient.

Myofascial trigger points (MTP) are small hypersensitive areas located in skeletal muscles that cause local and referred pain. Our recent study with 188 subjects revealed a strong relation between tinnitus and MTP. Tinnitus patients were almost five times more likely to present MTP than control subjects. Furthermore, 56% of the patients with MTP also presented temporary tinnitus modulation during digital compression of such points.

Our long term goals have been to identify different subgroups of tinnitus patients, making it easier to personalize the treatment according to the cause(s) and/or the patient's profile. Our specific aim is to evaluate the efficacy of MTP deactivation for tinnitus control in a population with tinnitus and MTP. We hypothesize that the actual deactivation of trigger points will show a significant improvement when compared to the sham deactivation.

Ninety-four adult tinnitus patients with MTP will be randomly assigned to a group receiving 10 sessions of actual deactivation of MTP or 10 sessions of a sham deactivation. Benefit will be determined through THI, numeric scale for discomfort, loudness matching and MML; factors that might predict success will be studied (gender, age, duration of tinnitus, type of perception, number and localization of MTP, presence of tinnitus modulation).

Reminding that tinnitus patients are much more likely to have MTP than non tinnitus patients, the impact of this study could be enormous if deactivation of such trigger points proves to be effective in this subgroup of patients. This proposal is innovative, well based on a good methodology and easy to be replicated by other colleagues in the future.

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