

## Assessment of Hearing Profile and Psychosocial Reactions of Elderly with Tinnitus in Southwestern, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Tinnitus is an observed condition in which people experience different kinds of auditory sensation without any external stimulation. It is a kind of health-related condition with evidence of perception of noise or ringing in the ear/head without propagation of sound signals. Often, tinnitus occurs as a symptom of underlying conditions such as age-related hearing loss, drug-related conditions, high blood pressure, ear injury, and evidence of accumulated earwax, cardiovascular disorders or metabolic disorder and/or a circulatory system disorder. Thus, without adequate health-care, individuals with tinnitus will experience communication difficulties and poor health-related quality of life.

Evidently, research outcomes have established significant relationships among tinnitus, reduced auditory performance and hypertension, with little attention paid to psychosocial well-being of elderly with tinnitus. This study was therefore, designed to determine the types, degrees and patterns of hearing loss that existed among the elderly with tinnitus. The psychosocial reactions of the same elderly due to tinnitus - experience were also investigated. The study adopted an ex post facto research design. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 480 participants from four Southwestern states (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Osun) in Nigeria. The study was carried out, using Pure-tone audiometric test (PTA) to determine the types, degrees and patterns of hearing loss, while Tinnitus Reaction (TRQ) and Tinnitus Handicap (THQ) Questionnaires, and MOS SF- 36 Health Survey were employed to investigate the perceived psychosocial reactions of the participants. Data were analysed, using frequency counts and percentages. The findings reveal conductive (208), sensor neural (680) and mixed (72) types of hearing loss, while there were mild (86), moderate (226), moderately severe (436) and severe (212) degrees of hearing loss. Flat (96), slopping (88), rising (116), noise-notched (287), U-shape (36) and high frequency (336) were the patterns of hearing loss observed. Hearing loss among the elderly with tinnitus was not peculiar to any gender (Male = 52.0%; Female =47.0%). Also, the findings establish high level of socio-emotional adjustment problems, reduced auditory performance, poor social relationships and withdrawal syndrome, feelings of depression and loneliness, reduced daily living functions, poor general well- being and reduced quality of life among the elderly assessed. Therefore, it was recommended that cases of tinnitus, with or without hearing loss should be rehabilitated early. Also, health-hearing care and comprehensive hearing conservation strategies as well as promotion of improved quality of life of the elderly should be given utmost priority.

**Keywords:** Hearing status, quality of life, elderly, tinnitus.



### Biography

Ayodele Osisanya is a lecturer/ rehabilitative audiologist in the audiology and speech pathology unit, Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is a member of the editorial board of several reputable journals, and at present, the he is the social secretary of Speech Pathologists and Audiologists association in Nigeria. He has presented papers at both local and international conferences and several of his articles have appeared in peer-reviewed journals.

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[10<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Otolaryngology](#) | June 22-23, 2020

**Citation:** Ayodele Osisanya, Assessment of Hearing Profile and Psychosocial Reactions of Elderly with Tinnitus in Southwestern, Nigeria, Otolaryngology 2020, 10th World Congress on Otolaryngology, June 22-23, 2020, PP. 1