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### **Tinnitus and sensorineural hearing loss: findings and treatment options**

Around two thirds of people with tinnitus report hearing loss, which strongly links the two conditions and often leads to a reduced quality of life. Causes of hearing loss include noise exposure, idiopathic sudden hearing loss, age-related hearing loss, family history and other toxic influences. There are also many tinnitus sufferers with normal audiograms up to 8000 Hz.

About half of those affected are affected on both sides and about 43% report additional sensitivity to noise (hyperacusis). In the United Kingdom, about 17% of the population is affected by chronic tinnitus; about half of them feel severely affected, and 3–5% are considered to be in need of treatment (prevalence study by the British Tinnitus Association (BTA) 1999). In 43% of cases, hyperacusis is also present.

Although hearing aids can significantly reduce the burden, less than half of those affected receive appropriate care. The current AWMF S3 guideline recommends hearing aids, cognitive behavioural therapy and participation in self-help groups as effective treatment options for tinnitus.