

# **Noise is not alone in causing Tinnitus**

**Noise is a key cause of tinnitus but not the only one.**

Middle ear and sinus infections cause almost as many cases of tinnitus and serious neck injuries increase the risk of suffering from tinnitus by more than one third. These were the conclusions based on an Australian study, conducted among 2,015 people over the age of 55 years.



Tinnitus is one side effect of ear and sinus infections. People suffering from ear or sinus infections have 30 percent and 35 percent increased risk, respectively, of suffering from tinnitus. In all, the researchers estimate that these two diseases cause 12 percent of all tinnitus cases. This compares to noise in the workplace which is associated with 14 percent of all tinnitus cases.

Severe neck injuries may also lead to tinnitus. The study found that people who had suffered serious neck injuries were 34 percent more likely than the general population to suffer from tinnitus.

Other factors were investigated, as well. Migraine sufferers were found to have a 28 percent increased likelihood of suffering from tinnitus. The association between hearing loss and tinnitus was found to be limited. For each 10 dB of hearing loss the risk of suffering tinnitus increased by 11 percent.

Work related noise was seen as the biggest factor. According to the study, individuals working in 'tolerable' noise levels are 39 percent more likely than the general population to suffer from tinnitus. In workplaces where regular conversation is drowned out by noise the additional risk is increased to 53 percent. However, the risk of suffering tinnitus as well as hearing loss can be cut dramatically with the use of earplugs or other hearing protection.