

# Severe tinnitus after head and neck injuries

## **Injuries to the neck or head may be the start of a life with tinnitus.**



**To more than one in ten suffering chronic tinnitus the problem stems from a neck or head injury. Such injuries are often associated with a particularly severe kind of tinnitus with more unpleasant symptoms.**

**2,400 patients suffering from chronic tinnitus and participating in a study conducted by the Oregon Health and Service University Tinnitus Clinic were asked about the causes of their tinnitus. More than 12 percent traced their tinnitus problem back to a head or neck injury. In this group, one third had suffered neck injuries or whiplash, exclusively. The other two thirds had suffered head injuries or a combination of head and neck injuries.**

**When compared with other tinnitus patients, the neck and head injury group often suffered from more daily problems because of their tinnitus. They had difficulty sleeping, relaxing, thinking clearly, and remembering. They also estimate the noise level of their tinnitus to be one third higher than other tinnitus sufferers. On the so-called Tinnitus Severity Index, this places them at an average 41.9 points, which, according to the study authors, is significantly higher than the 38.1 point average for the other patients.**

**Patients whose tinnitus is associated with head or neck injuries seek medical attention sooner than other tinnitus patients. On average, they seek treatment 2.3 years after the onset of their tinnitus whereas other patients wait 6.9 years. One possible explanation is that tinnitus caused by accident or trauma soon becomes so strong that it is hard to cope with. When tinnitus grows gradually in strength over years, the patients are better able to develop coping strategies, according to the researchers.**