Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy For The Treatment Of Chronic Tinnitus: Outcomes From A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study

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Objective: Tinnitus, the perception of sound in absence of an external acoustic source, impairs the quality of life in 2% of the population. Causal treatment options are scarce up to now so most therapeutical attempts aim to develop and strengthen individual coping strategies. In this context a randomized controlled clinical study has been conducted to investigate the efficacy of a specific mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy in patients suffering from chronic tinnitus. Methods: 36 Patients were enrolled in the study. Treatment was performed as group therapy at two training weekends which were separated by an interval of 7 weeks (eleven hours / weekend) and in four further two-hour sessions (week 2, 9, 18 and 22). Half of the patients randomly entered active treatment immediately whereas the other patients were assigned to a waiting list control condition. The primary study outcome was the change in Tinnitus complaints as measured by the German Version of the Tinnitus Questionnaire (TQ). Results: ANOVA testing for primary outcome showed a significant interaction effect time by group ($F=8.311$; $df=1$; $p=0.007$). Post hoc t-tests indicated an amelioration of TF scores from baseline to week 9 in both groups (intervention group: $T=6.174$; $df=17$; $p<0.001$; control group: $T=2.494$; $df=17$; $p=0.023$), but intervention group bettered at a higher rate than control group. Conclusion: In conclusion mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy may be considered a promising approach of treating tinnitus which merits further evaluation in clinical studies with larger sample sizes.