Title
The impact of tinnitus and high frequency hearing on cognitive performance.

Background
Tinnitus sufferers commonly report concentration difficulties. Previous research has shown poorer performance on behavioral cognitive tests in tinnitus sufferers compared to control subjects. However, those studies have consistently been failing to rule out the impact of hearing status, which is suspected to be a confounder.

Aims
To investigate whether tinnitus impacts cognitive performance when controlling for hearing status.

Methods
In a series of case control studies, age-, sex- and education matched tinnitus sufferers and individuals without tinnitus will be compared in terms of behavioral performances on cognitive tests. We will control carefully for hearing status and explore potential impact of hearing thresholds at supra clinical frequencies.

Preliminary results
Tinnitus per se does not seem to have negative effect on cognitive performance, but high frequency hearing thresholds (10-16 kHz) might.

Meaning
The present project shows that while tinnitus sufferers do complain about cognitive difficulties due to the phantom sound experience, the presence of tinnitus does not imply poorer cognitive performances (as measured by intense short-duration cognitive tests). Furthermore, the project highlights the importance of examining hearing status when examining tinnitus sufferers, and suggests that one should not stop measuring hearing thresholds at 8 kHz.

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