Reviewer’s report

Title: The Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI) database: A new approach for delineation of tinnitus subtypes and generation of predictors for treatment outcome

Version: 2 Date: 21 June 2010

Reviewer: William Noble

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I found the paper to be generally sound in its logic and presentation. I would recommend the authors seek advice from a native English writer in order to remove the infelicities of usage and grammar that are to be found throughout the text.

They are not glaring errors, but the paper will be easier to read if they are corrected.

The authors give the example of rTMS as providing promising results with variable outcomes. To my knowledge there is no good evidence that this technique provides non-transient changes in tinnitus experience. It is not clear if treatment protocols were agreed at the consensus development meeting, but I think it would be unfortunate if all this preparatory effort were to be predicated on outcomes only using rTMS.

The authors assert that the THI is a "validated questionnaire" but do not explain what they mean by this. Validated for what? I am, indeed, not aware that this particular scale has been tested against older questionnaires with known validity - for example the Tinnitus Effects Questionnaire (Hallam et al., 1988) or the Tinnitus Reaction Questionnaire (Wilson et al., 1991).

I found large parts of the section labelled "Ethical considerations, Database construction and technical details" very hard to follow. It may be, however, that those expert in the construction of data bases will have no difficulty understanding the descriptions of technical features of the data base and its management.