Reviewer's report

Title: Tinnitus treatment options: Online questionnaire of general practitioners and ENT physicians within Europe and the USA

Version: 2 Date: 11 September 2011

Reviewer: NIGEL PADGHAM

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The survey is sponsored - to look at need and likely use of new drug treatments for tinnitus - this should be more explicit in the aims.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes

3. Are the data sound?
No - the survey is based on un-substantiated recall - notoriously unreliable - this should be more explicit in the method. I accept it may be impossible to get better data from such a wide spectrum of people contributing to the data and the data are therefore still of interest as a ball-park estimate of patient numbers and types of treatments prescribed.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes with the above provisos

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? No - Only a single sentence refers to the likelihood of differences in treatment choice being due to the different health-care systems - for instance in the UK there is a severe shortage of clinical psychologists with an interest in tinnitus and therefore audiology departments provide talking therapy (CBT) but are basically technical staff and therefore may be more likely to give hearing aids and white noise generators. This type of resource led choice should be discussed and the simple descriptive text of national trends in treatment types discussed more. The survey does not drill down to the reasons for choices made and is weakened significantly by this omission in the questionnaire. The German use of hyperbaric oxygen is discussed in this way, but is only a small example of the differences between nations as it is the only country in which this is prevalent. The lack of a suitable drug is universal and therefore the conclusion that an effective drug should be sought is pretty basic as an observation.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Adequate, but could be refined

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests