

# Tinnitus: Healing From Home

## Examination of online 8-week Mindfulness Based Tinnitus Stress Reduction During the 2020 Covid Pandemic

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“Tinnitus is a **benign** body sensation that the brain has misunderstood as something important to pay attention to.”

But a person’s REACTION to tinnitus is often not benign.

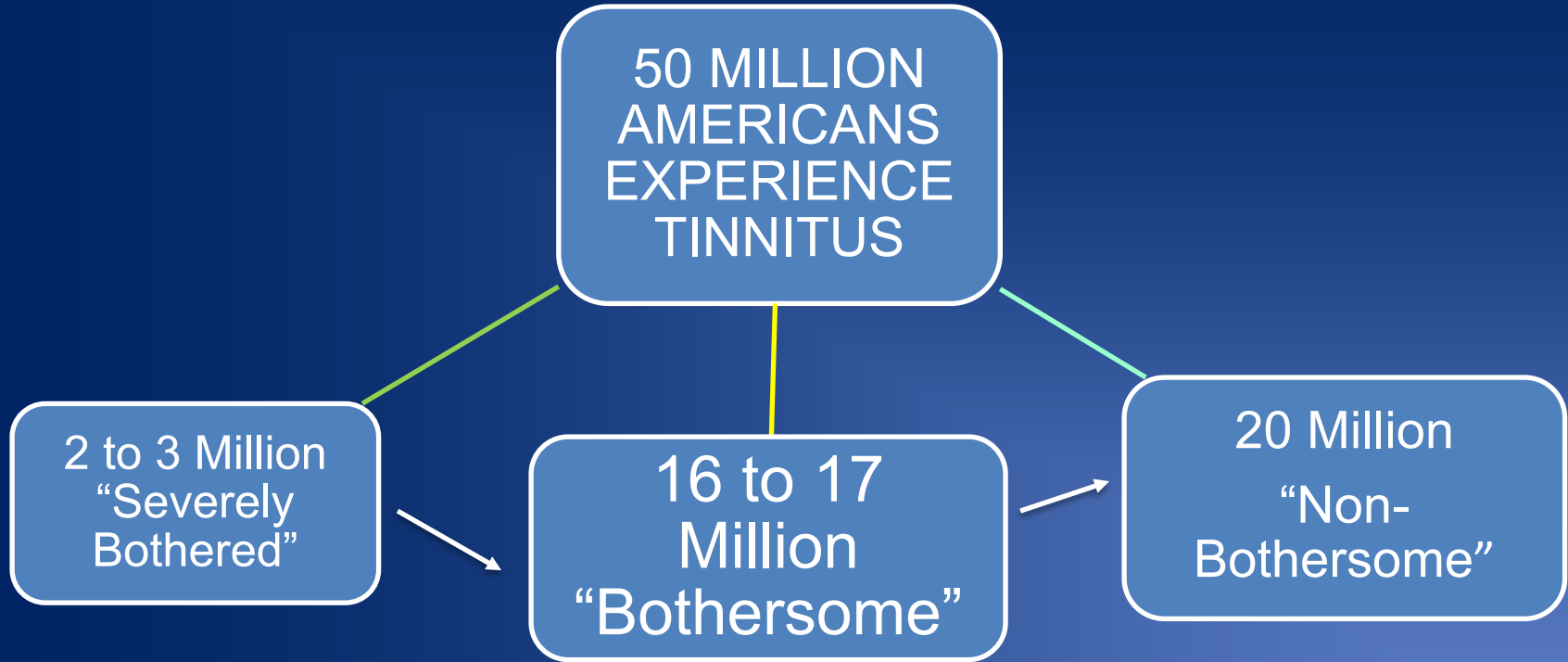


# Tinnitus: A Paper Tiger

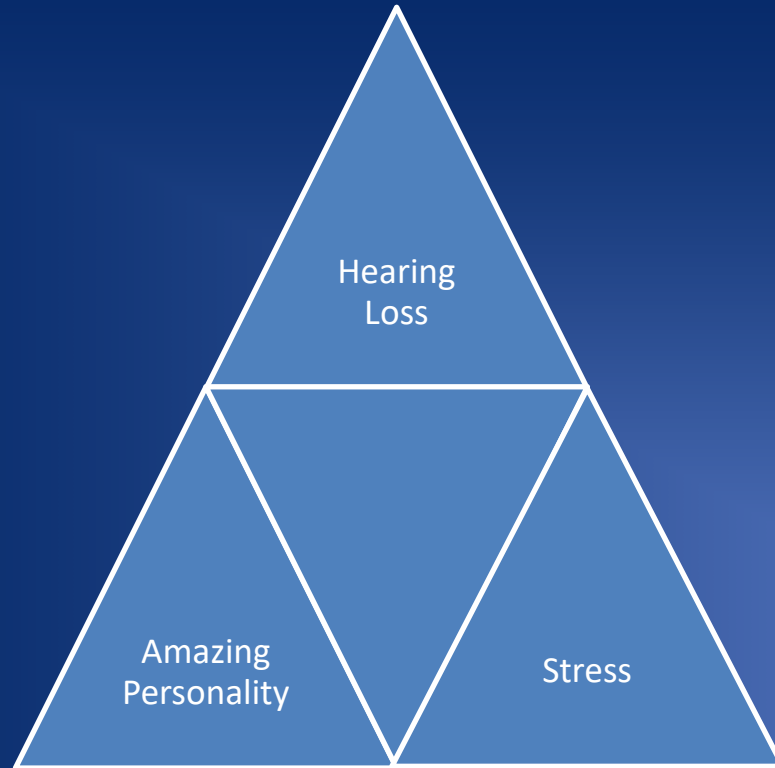


"Paper tiger" is the English translation of a Chinese phrase referring to something that appears threatening but is actually harmless or benign

# Who are we seeing in the Clinic?



# Tinnitus Trifecta



# The Special Sauce

- The Main Ingredients in helping a person shift their experience of tinnitus from 'bothersome' to 'non-bothersome' is threefold:
  1. Help the person with tinnitus to feel less anxious about tinnitus
  2. Make the person with tinnitus an expert in what tinnitus is and what it is not
  3. Design a tinnitus management plan that is tailored to the individual person based on their individual needs, wants, likes, and resources (Almost always involves an awareness building practice (ie., meditation))



# MindfulTinnitusRelief.com Course (2013)



- 8 weeks in length
- Asynchronous
- 8-weekly tinnitus lessons including:
  - Tinnitus Education
  - Mindfulness Lessons
  - Instructor led meditation videos, audio-recordings, gentle yoga/mindful movement, and readings
  - Automated emails
- Home Practice: 30 minutes per day, 6 days/week
- A Day-Long Mindfulness Retreat between the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> week
- Completion of Assessments at Pre-, Mid-, Post, & 6-months





“Tinnitus doesn’t seem like a terrible curse anymore.”

~ Sasha L.

Free Introduction



Click Here to  
Register >

Mindfulness is a special kind of awareness: it is a moment-to-moment awareness of our experience without clinging to the judgments our mind naturally makes. It frees you to be more present in your immediate experience, so that you can wake up to the wonder of the one life you are given. In the coming weeks, we will be exploring different ways to come out of “automatic pilot” mode by paying close attention to whatever occurs in the immediate moment.

Others have found that cultivating this practice has helped reduce the negative impact of tinnitus on their lives. The more open you can be to whatever you are experiencing at any moment, the more awake, alive, happy, and balanced you can be. This is the essence of the journey we will be taking together.







# March 2020

## Covid-19 Shelter-In-Place Hits

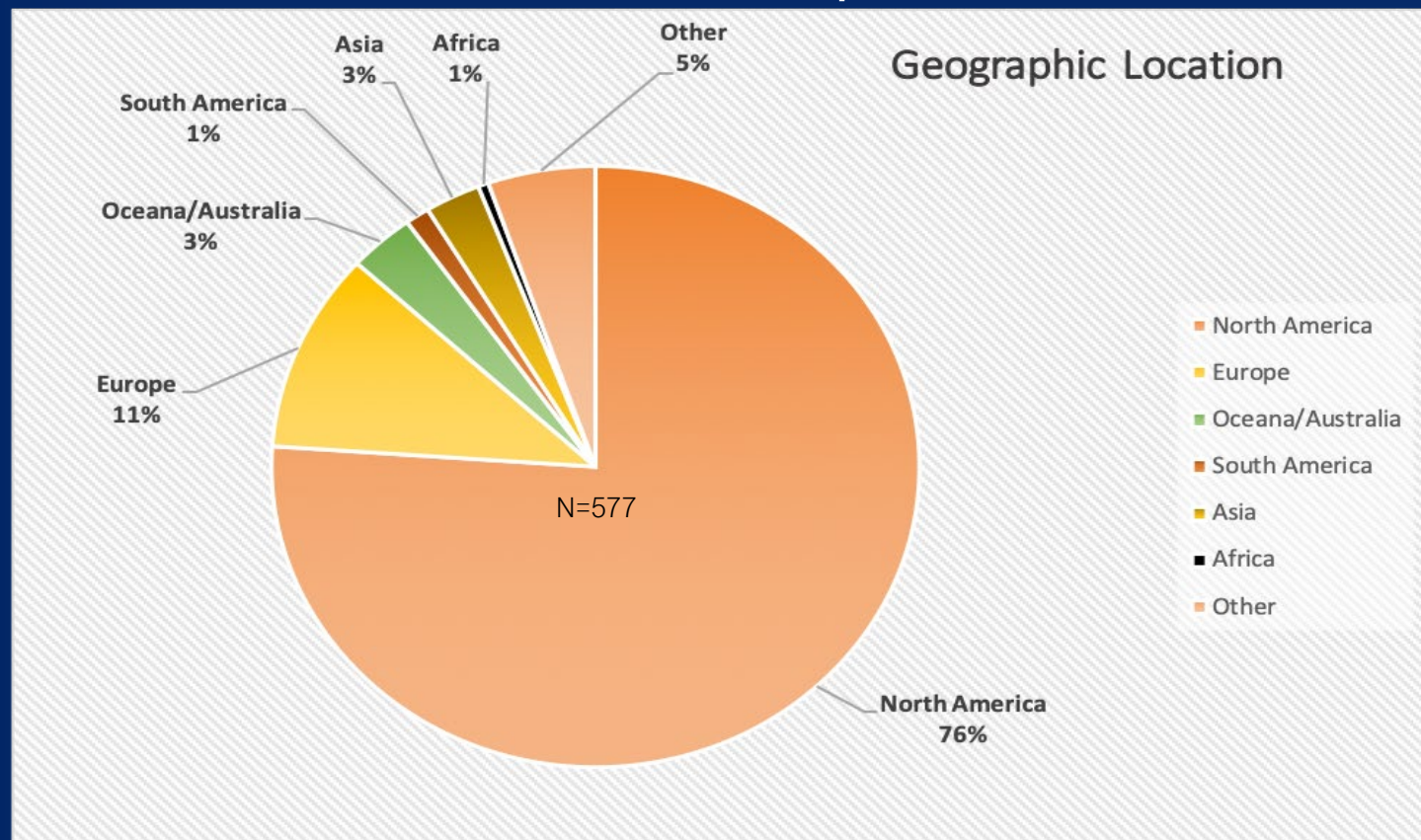


# March 25-June 9, 2020

- 879 people signed up worldwide to take the 8-week online i-MBTSR course for free
- 577 met inclusion criteria for study
- The Assessments were sampled at multiple time points:
  - Pre (n=577),
  - mid (n=101),
  - post completion (n=45)
  - 6 month follow-up (n=60)



# Who Participated?



# There were three questions that the study sought to answer:

- 1. Are there changes in the way a person relates to tinnitus as a result of the MindfulTinnitusRelief.com during the 2020 Shelter-In-Place period?
- 2. Is MindfulTinnitusRelief.com an effective treatment for those wanting to “heal from home”?
- 3. Who is most likely to benefit?



# Outcome Measures

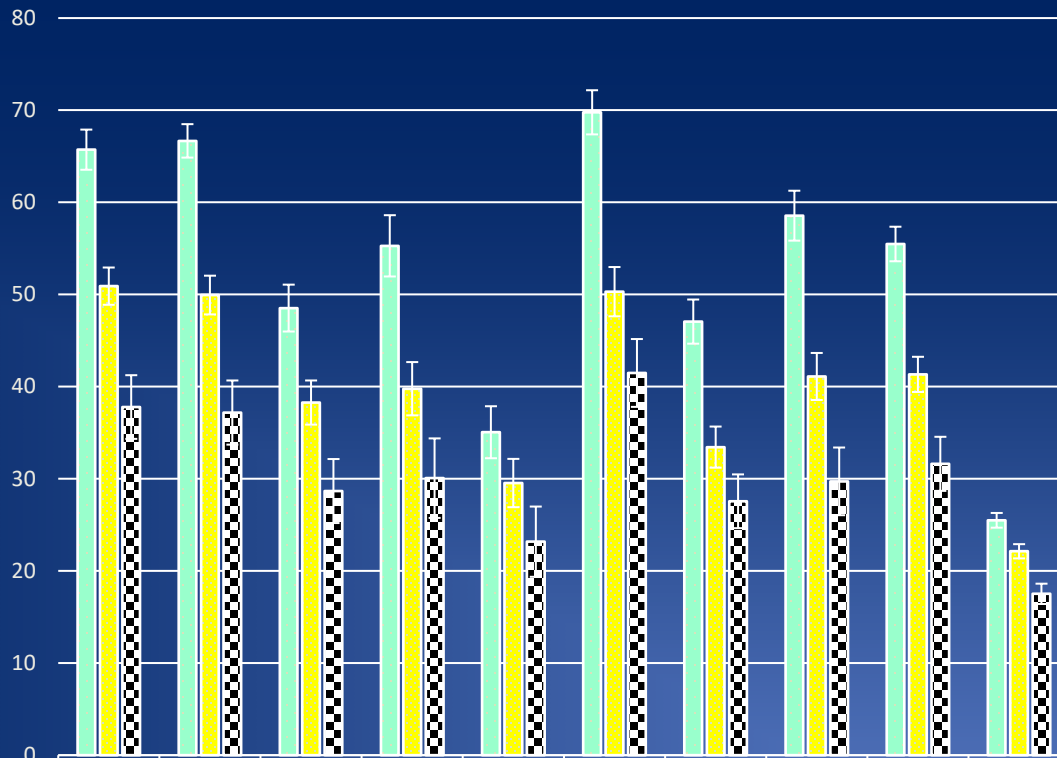
- Tinnitus Intake Questionnaire
- Tinnitus Functional Index (TFI)
- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)



# Average Scores by Group(s) Pre-, Mid-, & Post-Time Points Across Items

Pre N = 577  
Pre- Mid- N = 101  
Pre-, Mid-, Post- N = 45

Tinnitus Functional Index (TFI)  
Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)



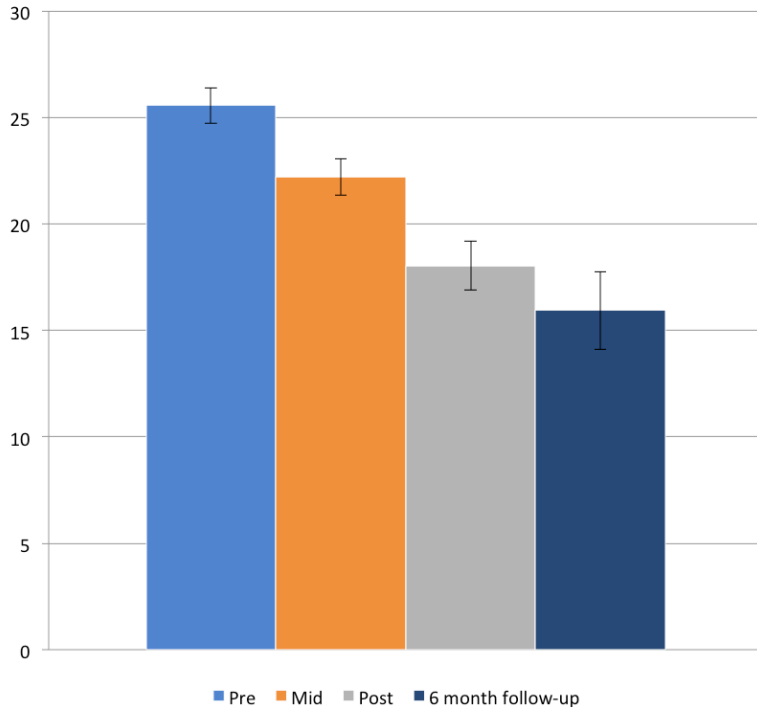
## Group and Time Point

Group and Time Point	TFI-Intrusive	TFI-Control	TFI-Cognitive	TFI-Sleep	TFI-Auditory	TFI-Relaxation	TFI-Quality of Life	TFI-Emotional	TFI	PSS
COMBO Pre-Mid & Pre-Mid-Post Groups (Pre Scores)	65.71	66.67	48.52	55.27	35.05	69.77	47.05	58.55	55.47	25.49
COMBO Pre-Mid & Pre-Mid-Post Groups (Mid Scores)	50.90	49.93	38.27	39.77	29.53	50.30	33.43	41.10	41.32	22.13
Pre-Mid-Post Group (Post Scores)	37.78	37.18	28.67	30.07	23.17	41.48	27.56	29.71	31.62	17.51

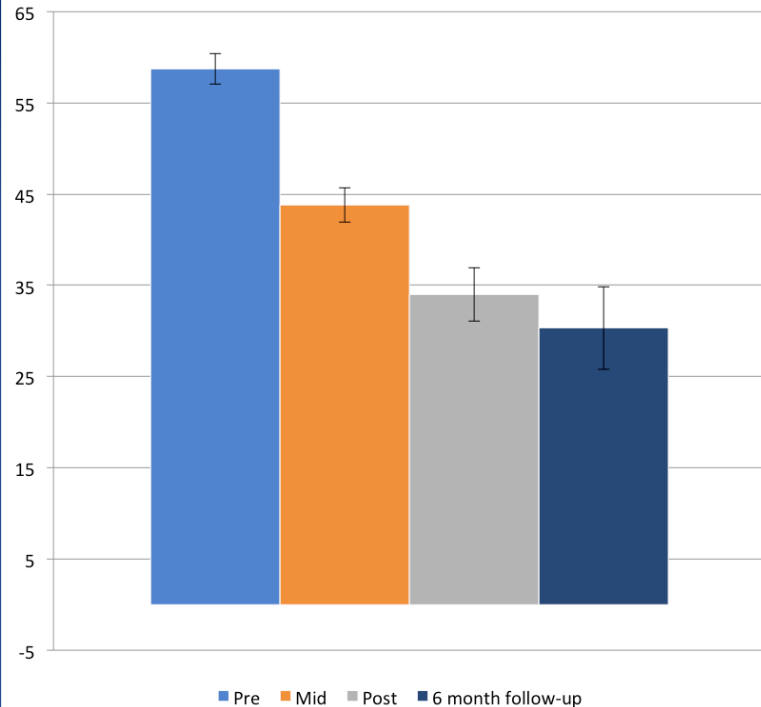


# Results – PSS & TFI Average Scores

**PSS Average Scores Across Time Points**



**TFI Average Scores Across Time Points**



# Conclusion: What We Learned

- Tinnitus intrusiveness and perceived stress decreased at mid-course and even decreasing further at course completion
- The gains were maintained at the six month follow-up
- The online i-MBTSR course appears to be a viable and effective treatment modality for this population
- Participants appear to benefit equally making the course easy to refer for all patients





What changes in yourself have you noticed since you began the course?

*"I found myself not labeling the tinnitus as something 'bad' – it just is."*

*"I have noticed how my tinnitus has impacted my life, but also how my reactions are in my control, even if tinnitus is not in my control"*

*"It's funny. After just a few weeks of starting the course, I am noticing that my tinnitus doesn't bother me as much anymore. And I'm getting along better with my husband."*

*"I'm getting sleep without use of medication."*

*"I am not bothered by the tinnitus as much as I used to be. I don't let it control my life anymore."*



# Future Steps:

- By 'Healing from Home', in-person visits are curtailed making this online option more convenient/safer for the audiologist and patient
- Home-Access puts the responsibility for healing back into the lap of the patient—where it belongs
- Identify any characteristics of individuals who are more likely to finish the course
  - The i-MBTSR COVID -19 cohort online course completion rate is similar to other online course data
- RCT comparative study -- efficacy with other treatments



# The Brain as Symphony





How is your orchestra sounding?

Thank You!

Questions?



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