A million motorcyclists putting their hearing at risk

Monday 3 April, 2023

This Motorcycle Safety Week (3-9 April), Tinnitus UK is calling for motorcyclists to protect their ears when at work or enjoying a leisure ride, as new data shows less than a third (29%) “regularly” or “sometimes” use hearing protection. This means that almost a million motorcyclists (994,000) in the UK are putting themselves at risk of hearing loss and tinnitus, both of which can be permanent.

One in seven adults are affected by tinnitus - which is a condition that causes the perception of noise when there is no external source. There is currently no cure for the condition.

Noise becomes a risk to hearing health at levels of 80dB or above. Riding noise levels vary, and are a combination of engine noise, road noise and wind turbulence but they are generally around 85-95 dB at speeds up to 35 mph, climbing to 110-116dB at 65mph. At these upper levels, damage can occur to hearing in less than one minute.

Caroline Savage, CEO of Tinnitus UK said: “Noise exposure is the single biggest preventable cause of tinnitus, and it is clear from our research that people appear to be unaware of the risks. Even if you’re only hopping on your bike for a short trip, use hearing protection. When it’s loud… Plug’em is our very clear message.”

She added “The theme of this year’s Motorcycle Safety Week is looking after your bike and using PPE. We want to make sure that people enjoy their motorbikes safely and to think of hearing protection as part of their PPE kit. We want protecting your ears to be second nature - the same way you put on a helmet before every ride. There should be no stigma around using ear plugs – we only have one pair of ears, and damage to our hearing is irreversible.”

More information about noise exposure and hearing protection can be found at tinnitus.org.uk/join-the-cause/plugem. Tinnitus UK’s team of trained advisers are able to offer help and support on 0800 018 0527 or via live webchat at tinnitus.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

Tinnitus is the sensation of hearing a sound when there is no external source for that sound. Someone with tinnitus may hear ringing, buzzing, hissing, whistling or other noises. Tinnitus can be there all the time or come and go. The volume of someone’s tinnitus can vary from one episode to the next.

Tinnitus comes in many types, but Tinnitus UK is here for everyone living with tinnitus.

We are striving for a world where no one suffers with tinnitus.

That’s why we provide free support to anyone with tinnitus or caring for someone with tinnitus.

That’s why we are leading the charge for more investment in tinnitus research.

That’s why we are connecting the research community to people living with tinnitus to ensure those

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searching for new treatments and a cure understand the impact of tinnitus on everyday lives.

That’s why we work with healthcare professionals to ensure you receive the right information to manage your tinnitus.

For every seven adults in the UK, one will have tinnitus. Think about that the next time you’re in the supermarket, on the bus, or walking down the street. Tinnitus affects 7.6 million people in the UK – with 1.5 million of them having severe tinnitus.

To everyone living with tinnitus our message is clear – your struggle is our cause.

tinnitus.org.uk

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