Marie and Jack Shapiro Prize Winner 2017 announced

Friday 29 September, 2017

The British Tinnitus Association (BTA) has presented the prestigious industry award, the Marie & Jack Shapiro Prize to a collaborative team of tinnitus clinicians and researchers. Eldré Beukes, George Vlaescu, Vinaya Manchaiah, David Baguley, Peter Allen, Viktor Kaldo and Gerhard Anderson have been awarded the prize for their paper 'Development and technical functionality of an Internet-based intervention for tinnitus in the UK.'

The prize and £250 cash was presented to Eldré Beukes and David Baguley by the Falklands War veteran, author and speaker Simon Weston CBE. The award took place at the BTA's 24th Annual Conference in Sheffield on 7 September 2017, which was attended by audiologists, hearing professionals, researchers and BTA members.

The winning papers were chosen from a shortlist of 12. The judging panel was formed of the BTA's Professional Advisers' Committee. Psychological treatments such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy are a proven intervention for reducing tinnitus distress. The winning study aimed to develop an internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT) intervention for those experiencing tinnitus in the United Kingdom as well as to identify specific aspects of the iCBT that required improvement.

The judges considered that the paper: "presents a first exploration of internet based CBT to alleviate tinnitus, and demonstrates the feasibility and effectiveness of the approach. iCBT could enhance the availability of treatments for tinnitus sufferers, and reduce waiting times and pressure on services. With challenges to service provision, novel approaches such as this are critical"

Prizewinner Eldré Beukes, PhD student at Anglia Ruskin University said: "What a huge honour! Together with my co-authors, I am thrilled to be awarded this prestigious prize. Many thanks to the BTA for this privilege. It certainly inspires me to continue this work. Seeing the positive effect this research has had for those distressed by tinnitus has been very encouraging."

She added: "Due to the high prevalence of tinnitus, creative approaches are essential to provide additional intervention options. Utilising the Internet removes geographical and existing service constraints. In addition, it can provide access to strategies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, not readily accessible to those with bothersome tinnitus. Transparency regarding the theoretical basis and content of interventions is important. Hence this paper. It outlines the fundamental principles on which this intervention is based, such as providing online support and ensuring that minimal technical barriers exist to using the intervention. This has been a really exciting avenue to develop with huge potential to improve the lives of those with tinnitus."

David Stockdale, Chief Executive of the British Tinnitus Association, said: "We are delighted that a paper which has an obvious clinical benefit for people with tinnitus has been awarded the Marie & Jack Shapiro Prize. There were many thought-provoking and commendable research papers in the running this year, and we are appreciative of all those who have undertaken research into tinnitus with the aim of improving the quality of life for people with tinnitus."

The Marie & Jack Shapiro Prize is given each year at the BTA Conference to the piece of published research, by a UK based author, 'most likely to result in improved treatment or public awareness of tinnitus,' that was published in the last calendar year. The prize is named after the late Jack Shapiro, the founder of the British Tinnitus Association, and his wife Marie, who both played an important role in the establishment of the charity and in raising awareness of tinnitus.

Ends

References

Beukes EW, Vlaescu G, Manchaiah V, Baguley DM, Allen PM, Kaldo V and Andersson G. Development and technical functionality of an internet-based intervention for tinnitus. *Internet Interventions*, 2016 6. pp. 6-15. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2016.08.002

Editors Notes

The British Tinnitus Association (BTA) is an independent charity which supports thousands of people who experience tinnitus and advises medical professionals from across the world. The BTA is the primary

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source of support and information for people with tinnitus in the UK, facilitating an improved quality of life. They aim to encourage prevention through its educational programme and to seek effective treatment for tinnitus through a medical research programme.

The support the BTA offers to 335,000 people per year who are affected by tinnitus is reliant upon the generous donations of their supporters and fundraisers. They receive no government support and need to raise half a million pounds each year to continue their UK wide support. Donations can be made via www.justgiving.com/BTA

Not an illness or disease, tinnitus is a term that describes the sensation of hearing a noise in the absence of an external sound. The noise can have virtually any quality. Ringing, whistling, and buzzing are common, but more complex sounds may also be reported. Troublesome tinnitus can be very distressing for the affected individual, and issues may arise with sleep, concentration and mood. However, in many cases, subtle changes in people's environment can address these issues, and improve quality of life.

The experienced team at the BTA understands the impact that tinnitus can have on the lives of those who experience tinnitus and those who live with them, so seeks to provide the most appropriate and expert advice and information free of charge – via a confidential freephone helpline on 0800 018 0527 and online at www.tinnitus.org.uk. The BTA can also post printed and audio information and advice.

Visit the BTA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BritishTinnitusAssociation and follow the BTA on Twitter at www.twitter.com/BritishTinnitus

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