

¹ Hearing Organization, Region Västra Götaland, Habilitation & Health, Gothenburg, Sweden. ² Dept. of Audiology, Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Background

Tinnitus affects up to 15% of the adult population globally, of which a proportion experiences a severe form of it. TFI-SE is the Swedish-language version of the Tinnitus Functional Index (TFI), a self-report instrument for measuring the degree of tinnitus discomfort and the effect of rehabilitation.

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the clinical utility of the Swedish-language version of the Tinnitus Functional Index (TFI-SE) as an outcome measure in the rehabilitation of individuals with distressing tinnitus, from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives..

Method and Materials

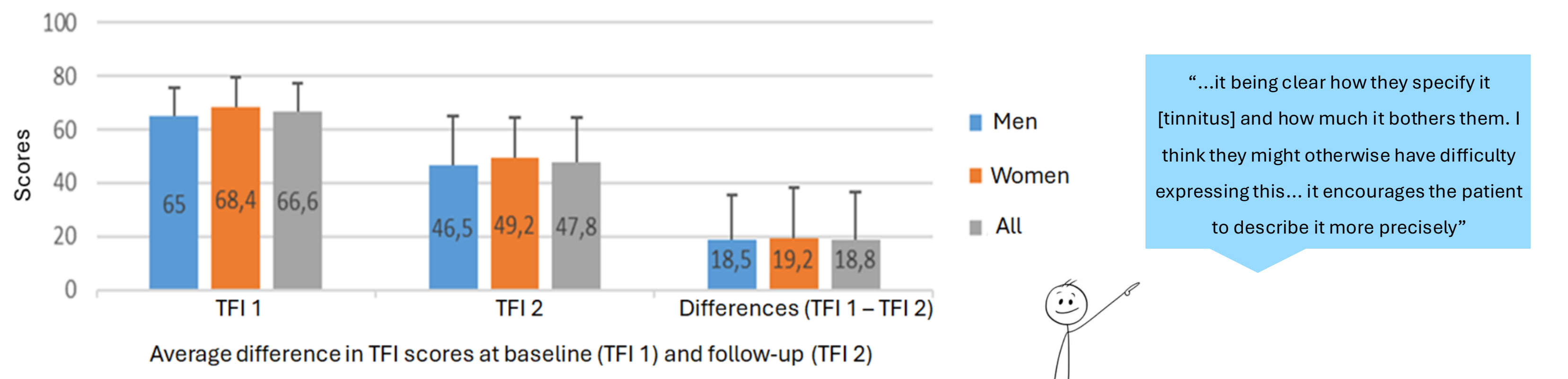
The quantitative study consisted of 46 patients who experienced a severe form of tinnitus, having scored ≥ 50 points on the TFI-SE at baseline. The qualitative study included 8 audiologists who work with tinnitus patients. The study used a mixed-methods approach. The quantitative part assessed the sensitivity of TFI-SE to treatment-related changes in patients (responsiveness) through prospective longitudinal data collection. The qualitative part involved focus group interviews with audiologists to evaluate their experiences of using TFI-SE in clinical settings.

Results

At follow-up, the average TFI score decreased from 66,4 to 47,8 ($p < 0,001$), indicating a significant improvement in tinnitus complaints. Large effect-sizes were observed for most subscales and effect sizes were larger in patients who reported an experience of improvement on a visual analogue scale.

Conclusions

The qualitative data indicated both positive and negative aspects of using the TFI-SE, with an overall positive reception among audiologists



“...it being clear how they specify it [tinnitus] and how much it bothers them. I think they might otherwise have difficulty expressing this... it encourages the patient to describe it more precisely”

“...it’s nice to have a validated document that...what the patient *wants to* [emphasis added] talk about. They actually find it quite comforting that someone asks these questions, which they no longer want to keep bringing up with those around them... they appreciate that someone addresses and listens to them”

	Non-responders (n=20) Do not experience any effect from treatment				Responders (n=22) Experience effect from treatment					
	Mean	SD	Effect size	p	Mean	SD	Effect size	p		
Total	12,9	12,7	1,02	Large	0,003	24,6	13,5	1,82	Large	0,000
(I): Intrusive	14,6	14,7	0,99	Large	0,003	28,7	14,5	1,98	Large	0,000
(SC): Sense of control	7,2	22,7	0,32	Small	0,207	16,4	23,5	0,70	Medium	0,027
(C): Cognitive	0,2	17,8	0,01	-	0,972	18,9	21	0,90	Large	0,016
(SI): Sleep	12,6	26,4	0,48	Small	0,009	29,9	22,5	1,33	Large	0,000
(A): Auditory	14,3	30,2	0,47	Small	0,124	11,5	25,4	0,45	Small	0,073
(R): Relaxation	13,2	22,5	0,59	Medium	0,065	34,2	21	1,63	Large	0,000
(Q): Quality of life	17,1	22,3	0,77	Medium	0,015	28,2	23,5	1,20	Large	0,000
(E): Emotional	22,7	21,1	1,08	Large	0,000	28,6	23,8	1,20	Large	0,000