Advancing tinnitus research and researcher training: a case study review and future perspectives

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1. Background

Tinnitus affects around 1/10 people and can have a major impact on quality of life. More research is needed to address even the most fundamental questions, such as whether it is a symptom or a condition.

ESIT (European School on Interdisciplinary Tinnitus) was a step in the right direction: an EU-funded DTP (Doctoral Training Partnership) comprising clinicians, academics, commercial partners, patient organisations, and public health experts from various European countries, with students from across the world.

2. How ESIT Worked

An interdisciplinary and intersectoral DTP, it offered network-wide training, integrating academic, clinical and industry partners and benefactors, where individual PhD projects interconnected and novel.

- Social/networking interaction at Training Schools and conferences was considered most valuable
- 7 non-ESIT students attended these in total
- Clinical internships provided real-world experience to direct potential impact of research
- Secondments were important: they were collaborative and provided varied perspectives
- International nature of the DTP highlighted language/culture differences, visa issues, even technology problems
- Up to April 2020: 21 peer-reviewed publications, of which 18 student-led, plus student representation at multiple international conferences, including as invited speakers

3. Results

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4. Conclusions

- Community is paramount to PhD journeys
- PPI groups should be involved at all stages of research to ensure relevance
- Tinnitus research needs more time, money and input
- Health and wellbeing, and a dedicated support system, must be included in international programmes

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esit.tinnitusresearch.net/