ReSound Tinnitus Management: ReSound Relief™ app trial results

Michael Piskosz, M.S., Global Medical Affairs

ABSTRACT

One of the greatest challenges in working with the tinnitus population is that everyone is different. View someone’s music list on their phone or tablet - the chances of having another person with the exact same playlist are highly unlikely. The sounds we listen to, whether they are by choice or by products of a particular environment, vary significantly from person to person. The sounds we prefer to listen to can even vary according to specific factors such as mood, time of day, or location, to name a few. In fact, Searchfield et al. pointed out that sounds used for sound therapy can vary in their temporal, spectral and emotion-evoking characteristics, and showed that individual differences can influence the effectiveness of specific sounds over others¹. Because of these individual differences, it is important to offer flexible sound therapy tools that can address the unique preferences for each individual. With the advancements in smartphone and wireless technology in recent years, this flexibility can be maximized with the use of sound therapy apps.

The Resound Relief app offers those struggling with tinnitus the ability to introduce sounds beyond what is inside their hearing instrument, into their sound therapy. This includes the ability to create personalized soundscapes, using environmental sounds, guided relaxation exercises and other downloadable sounds. Each soundscape can be personalized by name, and a layering of up to 5 sounds, allowing for very dynamic options. ReSound Relief ultimately acts as a multisensory personal sound player (Figure 1). ReSound Relief also offers counseling information to help distract them from focusing on their tinnitus. Each soundscape can be personalized by name, mood color and a layering of multiple sounds. Up to 5 sounds can be layered in any individual soundscape by using the sound mixer to create dynamic options. ReSound Relief also offers counseling information to help support your clinical guidance through a tinnitus management program, which makes the ReSound Relief app unique to other tinnitus apps available. Sounds from the ReSound Relief app can be wirelessly streamed to any of our compatible hearing instruments using our 2.4GHz wireless streaming technology, or simply used by plugging in a set of headphones.

Figure 1: The ReSound Relief app offers personalized soundscapes, multiple sounds files, helpful tips and much more.
To rate the efficacy of the ReSound Relief app for use in sound therapy, a trial was conducted asking 53 clinician’s to rate the app on 1-5 scale, considering a variety of factors. These include:

- Ease of learning how to use the app
- Flexibility of the app for sound therapy
- Quality of the counseling/educational content
- Benefit this provides to clinical sound therapy options
- How likely clinicians are to recommend the app to their users
- Ease of completing tasks relevant for clinical practice

To gather the trial data, each clinician was provided with a brief overview of the ReSound Relief app. Avoiding too much familiarity with the app prior to the trial was intended to warrant a collection of unbiased initial reactions to the app. Upon completion of the overview, clinicians were asked to explore the app at their own leisure, and subsequently fill out the trial survey. Survey results were collected from a combination of Audiologists that worked both in the VA and private sector. The results are displayed in Figure 2.

The results suggest that overall, clinicians found the ReSound Relief app to be highly flexible and beneficial for sound therapy, and a viable option they will offer to their tinnitus patients. The flexibility of the app was rated 4.4/5 and the benefit 4.5/5. In addition, clinicians reported a 4.5/5 rating that they would recommend the app to their tinnitus patients to help in tinnitus management.

As with many ReSound Relief apps that are used for the first time, there appears to be a short learning curve on how to maximize use of the app. Learning the app was rated 4.1/5. It is recommended to familiarize one’s self with the app first, before suggesting it for patient use. That being said, all clinicians were asked to complete 2 tasks. The first was to locate the Educational Tips section of the app and review the counseling content. Overall, the ease of completing this task was rated 4.3/5. The other task was to create a soundscape using the sound mixer.

The results suggest clinicians found this an easy task, rating it 4.5/5. Overall, the trial results suggest that the ReSound Relief app is a flexible tool that should be considered as part of a greater tinnitus management program. The ReSound Relief app is available for free in both the App Store and Google Play.

REFERENCES

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