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Mister Tinnitus

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I always thought of Dick Salvi as “the man who liked salicylate” and as “Mister Tinnitus.” We have met regularly, but not frequently, over the last 30 or so years at tinnitus conferences —of which Dick organized quite a few—at ARO, and at the yearly editorial board meetings of *Hearing Research*. But for this particular task, I wanted to see if my impression of Dick as basically a tinnitus man was correct, and looked up all papers under the name Salvi RJ on PubMed. Except for a half dozen papers in Chinese (must be his second language) I found 175 papers that I could read. I know he was also prolific in writing book chapters, but I leave those out for my purpose to “know the man by his deeds.” Dick had several research topics that did stand out over the years; he started in 1974 (!) with publications on noise trauma in animals and continued that till 2005, amassing 24 papers on this topic. To my great surprise, he also was a chicken, a.k.a. ‘hair cell regeneration,’ a person with 23 papers published between 1991 and 2010. In a long overlapping period from 1986-2015 his other strong interest was in the action of ototoxic drugs, among others cisplatin and carboplatin, which resulted in 35 papers. Surprisingly his salicylate and tinnitus-in-general papers were sporadic but still amounted to 27 papers over a long stretch starting in 1983. A year later—a close second—my first paper on tinnitus appeared as well. Not surprisingly, as a person who explores every new topic, Dick also contributed to the genetic underpinnings of hearing and hearing loss starting in 2002, thereby generating 16 papers in the last 15 years.

Although quite a few of his publications were in general neuroscience science journals (n = 20), he preferred the specialty journals such as *JASA* (early years, n = 20) and, his big favorite, Hearing Research (across the years, n = 53). He also contributed considerably to applied audiology (n = 21) and clinical journals (n = 11). In the last decade his group preferred the open access journals such as *PLOS One* and Frontiers.

Since I also have published quite a bit, I traced how often I cited the Salvi RJ papers; in particular I noted that 37 of his papers were my favorites, and they constitute 21% of all his PubMed papers, and all of his salicylate and tinnitus papers topped up with a handful of reviews on auditory plasticity as well. Coincidentally, Dick’s clear peak production period and mine both were in 1996-2000; 43 versus 40 PubMed papers respectively, and our outputs across the years had a similar inverted U-shape.

Dick’s research has spanned a remarkable period in auditory research, comprising the discoveries of otoacoustic emissions, auditory plasticity, genetic causes of hearing loss, hidden hearing loss, to the spontaneous regeneration of avian hair cells, and he was a major contributor to this excitement. But besides the basic science, he also had a keen ear about what would be practical and useful for people with hearing loss and, yes, tinnitus. He became a strong force in the American Tinnitus Association. Long may his contributions have an impact on the field of audiology.