

Bringing HEARsmart™ to music venues in Victoria

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Background

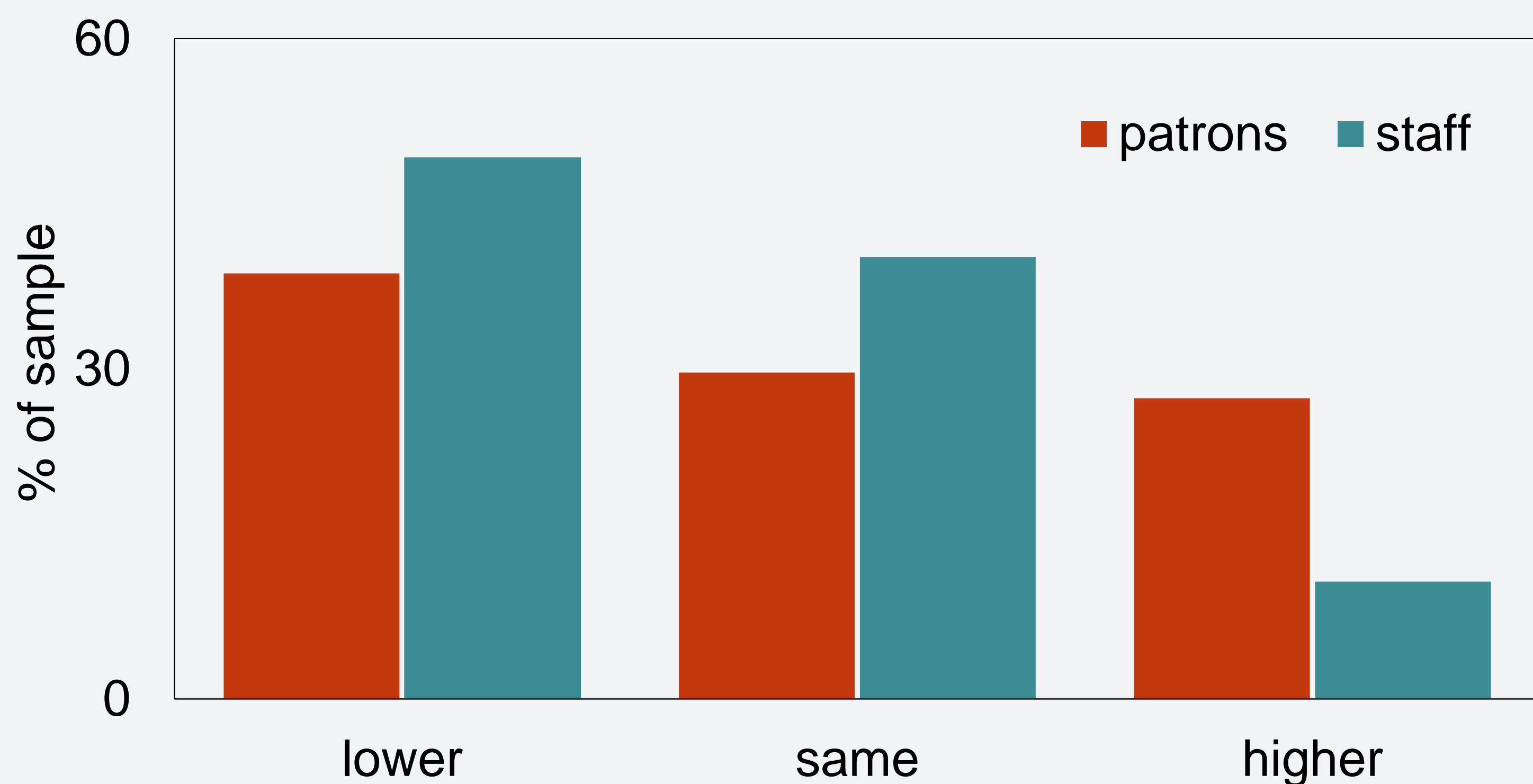
Previous research suggests that patrons of nightclubs and live music venues experience tinnitus and other symptoms more than non-patrons, and that regular patrons **would prefer noise levels to be lower** than the levels typically recorded in these venues (Beach et al 2013).

Methods

- We approached **three Melbourne music venues** to collaborate with us to develop and trial HEARsmart™ initiatives to reduce the risk of hearing damage for patrons and staff, without affecting the social and musical experience.
- We measured the sound levels during live band performances at the venues.
- Ninety-two patrons and 23 staff were surveyed about their attitudes towards the sound levels and hearing health.

Results: Preferred sound levels

Most patrons and staff preferred sound levels that were lower than or the same as current levels.



Symptoms and earplugs

- Tinnitus and/or TTS were experienced by 74% of staff and 74% wore earplugs.
- Tinnitus and/or TTS were experienced by 54% of patrons, but only 26% wore earplugs.

Actual sound levels

ADE = acceptable daily exposure

Venue A: Metal/Punk

109 dB for 3½ hrs

110 ADEs

Venue B: Electronic/Indie Pop

100 dB for 4 hrs

16 ADEs

Venue C: Folk Pop/Indie Rock

100 dB for 3½ hrs

14 ADEs

Patrons: preferred improvements

- Use of soft furnishings to absorb sound
- Decrease the volume
- Quiet areas to talk in
- Free earplugs

Staff: preferred improvements

- Use of soft furnishings to absorb sound
- Decrease the volume
- Breaks from loud areas
- Rotation between quiet and loud areas
- Free earplugs

What's next?

- Provision of free earplugs
- Trial of decibel banking software (10EaZy) as a way of managing sound levels during live gigs in a collaborative and transparent process between sound engineer, musicians, and venue management.

