

# An Introduction to Wind Turbine Syndrome



JANICE PEASE · TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2017 2 Reads

Wind Turbines have negative health and environmental impacts that must be properly assessed and mitigated. One of the topics that is most concerning to people living within close proximity to the turbines is “Wind Turbine Syndrome”.

“Wind Turbine Syndrome”, as named by Nina Pierpont, is the compilation of symptoms from living near industrial turbines. The symptoms, numerous and devastating, seem to come from a combination of disturbances including repeated and turbulent audible noise from the blades rotating, light flicker, and infrasound. Wind Turbine Syndrome (WTS) symptoms include (but are not limited to): sleep disturbance, awakening in panic, concentration problems, memory loss, sensation of pulsation, tinnitus, ear pressure, dizziness, vertigo, nausea, visual blurring, tachycardia, irritability, stress, and anxiety. The list of symptoms were compiled by Pierpont, in her book “Wind Turbine Syndrome, A Report on a Natural Experiment”. Pierpont gives the results of her case study of 10 families, their symptoms, their testimonies/experiences, and the preexisting conditions. After reading the book and looking at the data she presents, including the fact that 8 out of 10 families moved before the printing of the book (the 9th family not able to afford to), I feel with certainty this issue is worth looking into deeper and making mandatory the study of this before breaking ground on any new projects.

There seem to be many variables that determine whether a person will be effected by the wind turbines including terrain, weather conditions, turbine operation speed and pattern (intermittent seems to have a larger effect), maintenance of the turbines (grinding from bad bearings, etc.) previous conditions in patients such as migraine, motion sickness, inner ear issues, asthma, etc. One person can be devastated while living with someone seemingly unaffected, it is this that muddies the waters in this discussion and opens the door for skepticism. However it seems perfectly plausible to me that some would be more affected and

vulnerable than others, much the same as certain people seem more sensitive to light, noise, or physical sensation. The stimulation of a person's senses might produce greater effects in some than others. Another variable is

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audible sound, if the audible sound is relatively quiet then the infrasound seems to have more of an affect on the experiencer and the vibration more noticeable.

Dr. Alec Salt and his colleagues at WA University School of Medicine in St. Louis researched and explained how inaudible sound can cause negative health effects to humans like the people exposed to the wind turbine sound. Dr. Alec explains how the vestibular mechanisms of the inner ear are affected by low frequency noise, this effects balance and perception. This physiological issue caused by the low frequency seems to trigger motion sickness in persons susceptible. Sensations of pulsation, vibrations, intermittent sound, and the other noise attributed to wind turbines will most certainly affect all the human systems (nervous, circulatory/ cardiovascular, immune, etc.). The symptoms of WTS seem to me to be ailments from being exposed to audible sound, non-abating and unpredictable turbulent noise, light flicker, the stress that accompanies habitat alteration, and infrasound. Any stimulation that could affect sleep pattern, circadian rhythm, and/or trigger the fight or flight response would accomplish the results of WTS and is an obvious offender that needs to be limited and revised to not cause these effects.

All over the world thousands of people are trying to shed light on the suppressed understanding of infrasound and its various health impacts. I believe allowing WTS to go un-researched by the world's specialists in human health (in the areas of cellular health, immunology, audiology, psychology, neurology, etc.) to be a human rights violation.

The World Health Organization recognizes the role noise pollution plays in quality of life in the guidelines- WHO Night Noise Guidelines Community Noise (1999), the updated & extended version WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe (2009), and WHO The Burden of Disease From Environmental Noise (2011). Although these papers specifically sited (audible) traffic noise the data could be used to extrapolate comparable data/symptoms/numbers from the industrial wind turbine contributions to the overall noise of a community.

There are hundreds of supporting articles that question the science and ethics behind this so-called green/ renewable energy that is littering the landscape all across America. Before we continue to devour the landscape with these industrial giants I believe it would be wise to go over the current regulations and science behind the setback recommendations, sound/ infrasound limits, and the acceptable change in landscape character affecting the locals and wildlife of

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project area. Much of the information and data that is compiled was gathered using limited

measuring spectrum by companies who stand to gain a lot from the information supporting the idea of wind turbine's safety and overall beneficial qualities. Unfortunately regardless of the thousands of people affected by this syndrome all over the world this is still debatable, which seems ludicrous to me. There is not a lack of scientific evidence as much as there seems to a lack of interest in the science by the political leaders, energy companies, and environmental scientists. Despite the fact that NASA along with many other organizations have published studies on their findings of effects on people from infrasound/ inaudible noise, infrasound is treated as this illusive unquantifiable thing. The infrasound issue resembles a Sasquatch or Loch Ness Monster observed only by loonies, those looking for their 10 minutes fame, or by the neurotic hypochondriacs (people ailing from the nocebo effect). Regardless of what is causing the effect, it is happening for those who suffer it and needs to be addressed. I was able to find many articles on the effects of low frequency noise/vibration on humans and animals alike. After researching the topic of the sound related to wind turbines I have come to the conclusion that under current circumstances it is unwise and unsafe to continue the projects underway in and around communities. I think that measurements should be taken ahead of time at the sites of projects underway at communities where there is no objection to turbines, those sites should be monitored by unbiased third parties, data taken over a few years from the entire population within a 10 mile range.

One of the problems that blocks this type of data gathering is the wind turbine company agreements. With every contract signed by the leaseholders or neighbors who signs a "good neighbor agreement" and/or border easement, the person is signing a gag clause. The gag clauses make it illegal for anyone who receives payments unable to say anything negative about the wind company or inform others they have signed the lease/agreements. This greatly affects a scientist's ability to have a good population sample for study of effects in that area, not giving an accurate picture of the true scope of the disturbances and those afflicted. This is just one of the many ways the wind turbine company is keeping the communities from learning about the problem and planning as a town to avoid the negative effects through proper site restrictions, ordinances, and zoning.

At 2 separate presentations in Parishville & Hopkinton, NY by Iberdrola/Avangrid I spoke with their representatives. I discussed my concerns for the area including infrasound hoping to

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gain a better understanding of their perspectives around the phenomenon of WTS. The response was that WTS is not a real issue to be considered when weighed against the consequences of climate change and the need for green energy. I questioned them on the preliminary steps for determining the sites for the turbines and what measurements are taken, studies are done, and such to determine the most wind and least impact on residents. The answer was simply wind tower measurements, and there are no measurements of infrasound.

Infrasound being a quantifiable thing still seems to be a complete mystery to the industry or so they behave.

On October 15th 2016 I attended a presentation held in Parishville, NY where 4 speakers talked of the many concerns surrounding Industrial Wind Turbines, most notable was the Therrien family. The Therriens, from Sheffield VT, own property that is surrounded by wind turbines. The family of 4 (parents & 2 children) became very ill while living in their residence. The symptoms (which were not present prior to the turbines) were debilitating included neurological tremors, anxiety attacks, sleep disturbances, dizziness, nausea, and more. They had to leave their property, and were unable to sell it due to the turbines being there. Their property has become a rich hub to study noise vibration and environmental impacts of 16 418ft tall nearby turbines known as Vermont Wind. This interview can be seen on You Tube @ [https:// www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) Parishville Wind Meeting Part 3. You can hear me asking various health and infrasound related questions, from these questions I was able to truly understand the stress and sadness they feel from their ordeal. The Therriens lost their health, the use of their property for hunting, their home, their community, and their stability as a family, and the financial strain has created additional stress. Their story was compelling and heartbreaking. The husband, an unassuming blue collar worker, on the edge of tears spoke of his loss of control over his life and the land that had been in this family for years. They both told of interrupted sleep, anxiety, heart palpitations, and irritability that had not occurred in them before the installation of the turbines.

I was most affected by the overall presence of the defeated and depressed couple who stood

before us. I asked them of their children's experience, since the small children were both under 5 they were not able to communicate their discomfort except through behavior and covering their ears. The children had disturbed sleep, taken to sleeping with their parents, and had dark circles around their eyes indicating the physical effects of sleep loss and stress.

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Another aspect of this predicament is the effects on wild life. Infrasound will surely be a concern for animals whose hearing and senses are acute such bats(echolocation). Vibration in general is a large component of animal life of an ecosystem, worms respond to it, moles use it to detect predators, and other animals use it to communicate. Although this notion might be a side note I think it is something that needs to be considered alongside the concern for humans.

If we are going to continue using industrial turbines to meet the growing demand for more and more power then we need to go forth in such a way that people's quality of life can be maintained by requiring a minimum setback that coincides with the studies of safety (which have yet to really be done). The best setback to ensure safety of communities I saw was the recommendation by Eskdalemuir Scotland Applied and Environmental Geophysics Keele University which advised 6.2mile=10km. Every town should have the right to set these limitations and provide a safety zone for the community members.

There needs to be further studies, since there is conflicting evidence not only on WTS but on the reliability of industrial wind turbines (IWT), the carbon footprint of IWT, and whether the overall cost of using them is worth the negatives. I believe, as with anything that is of this scale, we should err on the side of caution. All of the foreseeable consequences should be weighed before we as a world continue with any mass implementation. If we had been more

cautious with other such decisions and weighed the cost benefits of power production we might not have had instances like Fukushima Chrenobyl, Exxon Oil Spill, BT Spill, water pollution from fracking, etc. With our overpopulated planet it seems to me we could come up with a few brains that could find a solution that does not produce waste/pollute, produce negative health effects, destroy the landscape, and endanger our future. I think we need to demand that the negatives are always considered before mandating such a solution to our climate crisis.

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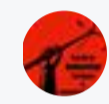
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