

The “Cost” of Silence

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SUMMARY

Changes in the organism of control desk operators caused by difficulties faced during productionally relevant speech information processing under conditions of intense occupational noise, represent the psychophysiological “cost” of noise masking. Its presence attests to difficulties in processing before deterioration of the quality of the latter while its quantitative characterisation correlates positively with the degree of the masking effect of noise and with the neuropsychic stress of this particular type of work. For this reason an attempt is made to demonstrate noise masking under laboratory conditions with its approximate quantitative evaluation at two signal/noise ratios - + 15 and + 5.

The statistically significant differences between the values of pulse rate, plethysmography and vocal exertion at the above ratios point to both its presence, and to the necessity to be considered when assessing the occupational burden and standardisation of noise intensity in productions associated with speech signals.

Key words: occupational noise, neuropsychic stress, physiological response

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