Patients' Perception of Pain and Music Therapy Intervention

Pilot Study D4

Research by Rachael Finnerty, (BPsych, PG Music Therapy), Music Therapist
Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre and University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada


Abstract

Patients' Perception of Pain and Music Therapy Intervention

According to Han (1998), pain and music appear to be processed in the same part of the brain. This indicates that the stimulus of music may potentially be employed to override the stimulus of pain. Live music might refocus attention and distract individuals from their pain. Song writing used as a means of self-expression may also reduce levels of anxiety. Music therapy promotes, maintains and restores mental, physical, and emotional health. This study aims to evaluate the potential of Music therapy as an option for pain intervention. Participants are asked to rate their level of pain both preceding and following music therapy intervention (0 = no pain, 10 = extreme pain). Medication times are considered by initiating sessions approximately one hour following an analgesic.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that levels of pain perception will be lowered after the music therapy session; and upon repeat sessions; as the therapist and patient begin to build a therapeutic relationship, pain perception will be further reduced. It is also hypothesized that those displaying symptoms of depression will initially become more aware of their pain after a session as a result of increased awareness.

Purpose

To observe the effects of music therapy as an intervention for pain.

Participants

10 elderly patients who had expressed they are experiencing pain.

Example of Survey

Patients' Perception of Pain and Music Therapy Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time of Music:</th>
<th>Visit #:</th>
<th>Primary Diagnosis:</th>
<th>Medication and Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Rachael Finnerty Music Therapist, D4</td>
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</tbody>
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Nurse rating of Patient's level of agitation prior to music therapy intervention: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Questions to Patient Prior to Music Therapy Intervention:

What number best describes your pain right now? (0 = no pain, 10 = extreme pain)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

If <5, RH provides analgesic and Music Therapy session commences the later

Do you like music? Tell me about the role that music plays in your life or Why is music (not) important to you?

Questions to Patient Following Intervention:

What number best describes your pain right now?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Patient Comments:

Benefits of Music Therapy that Influence Pain Perception

Music is a universal form of communication and means of expression.

Music can change and evoke moods, rouse memory, influence physiological processes and stimulate specific brain areas. It provides structure and a safe context for verbal and non-verbal communication as well as immediate feedback. Music is motivational, easily accessible, and enjoyable.

- Build Self-Confidence
- Alleviate Pain
- Self-Satisfaction
- Sense of Accomplishment
- Effect Mood
- Increase Self-Awareness
- Induce Relaxation

Previous Study on Music Therapy and Pain Perception

If ‘I’d known you were coming I wouldn’t have taken my painkillers’

- Music is a great medicine
- Hospitals have changed so much, the music helps me forget about my pain
- I used to sing all the time, but now there’s nothing left, I’m empty
- Music really lifts me up, gives me energy
- I feel much better, I was feeling woozy from the drugs*
- I really enjoyed that*
- ‘Please keep going! Makes me feel better’
- ‘If they had this every night we’d all be out sooner’
- ‘It’s a different place when she’s here’

Observations

Patients began clapping to the music after reporting shortness of breath.

Music therapy may be able to provide verbal feedback

Figures:

Quantitative

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Primary Diagnosis:

Examples of Patient Feedback

Music therapy decreased levels of pain in most cases in addition to pain medication, and in some cases, when the patient had not yet taken any pain medication for various reasons.

Music therapy may be able to provide additional relief for those who experience adverse effects to medication and to those who refuse to take medication. As well as providing relief to those who are taking pain medication and still experiencing pain.

Limitations of Study

- Participants inconsistent in age and diagnosis
- Participants on ‘Transition Unit’ therefore repeat sessions are inconsistent
- Interruptions due to sharing of space with other patients and health care workers
- Different medications received by patients
- Patients wanting ‘to satisfy’ therapist by giving ‘right answer’
- Cognition level of patients affected gathering quantitative results
- Study interrupted by SARS limiting patient accessibility
- Setting made it too difficult to consistently acquire observations from nursing staff as set out in survey

Discussion

This pilot study presents supportive findings for the use of music therapy as an intervention for pain. Verbal feedback was positive from all patients, including the one patient who rated an increase in pain perception on the scale. This patient was symptomatic of depression, and the music therapy sessions included writing songs that reflected her emotional state. As stated in the hypothesis, it is possible that this process made her more aware of herself and her pain (both emotionally and physically). It is interesting to note her pain level remained the same as the sessions continued week 3 and 4.

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Music therapy may be able to provide additional relief for those who experience adverse effects to medication and to those who refuse to take medication. As well as providing relief to those who are taking pain medication and still experiencing pain.

The results of this pilot project have given reason to further research the use of music therapy as an intervention for pain.