

The Healing Power of Music

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Background

- Analysis and use of complementary, non-pharmacological, and holistic treatments are vital to quality nursing care and symptom management, relating directly to patient outcomes.
- Music has been shown to have a powerful influence across cultures and throughout history, enhancing health and well-being and promoting healing.

Objectives

- To understand music as a therapeutic intervention through the lens of evidence-based practice, in alignment with nursing theory and the nursing process.
- To discuss the nursing implications of music in the treatment of patients while considering costs, potential barriers, and strategies for implementation.



Literature Review

- Key words included “music therapy”, “music listening”, “nursing care”, “nursing intervention”, “healing”
- Reviewed articles between 2002 and 2020. Excluded articles not written English.
- 16 articles included in the final review

Literature Review Findings

- Using music as a complementary therapy in nursing has been shown to help manage symptoms, facilitate quality of life, and improve patient satisfaction and outcomes across various patient populations, ages, and healthcare settings.
- Utilized as a coping mechanism and distraction method.
- Stimulates artistic creativity and cognitive functions, fosters comfort and control, and improves level of consciousness.
- Relieves anxiety and pain, reduces stress factors and agitation, increases feelings of relaxation, improves sleep.
- Can cause physiological changes to the body including a decrease of blood pressure, heart rate, and respiratory rate with a potential to improve metabolism and heighten the immune system.
- Can improve motivation and elevate mood.
- Goal is to get closer to the restoration of balance and well-being for the mind, body, and soul of the patient.

Nursing Implications

- Music is a non-invasive, non-pharmacological, cost-effective, low-risk, well-tolerated, easily accessible, easy-to-apply, patient-centered approach to facilitate treatment.
- Assists the patient in the healing process on various levels: physical, psychosocial, emotional, spiritual.
- Improves patient-nurse communication and the interpersonal relationship.



Implementation Recommendations

- Six principles to consider: intent, authentic presence, wholeness, preference, entrainment, and situating the client.
- Common methods used include tempo of 60-80 bpm, volume of 40-60 decibels, soothing qualities evoking the relaxation response, without strong rhythms or percussion, for about 30 minutes at a time. Faster speeds or percussive music may help energize or uplift patients.
- Use of a music application that offers an extensive choice of musical genres allows for patient autonomy. Headphones, speakers, portable music players, television systems with different music genres, or mobile phones are all possible avenues for music listening.

Conclusions

- Music has many positive benefits when used as an individualized, supportive therapy in nursing care.
- Further research should be completed on the efficacy of music and specific music interventions for different patient populations and settings.
- Increased education and support for nurses, as well as a common set of best practice guidelines, are needed to effectively implement music as a complementary therapy.