

Music Therapy: A Pleasant Way of Managing Depression

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Music has well established psychological effects, including the induction and modification of cognitive status, mood and emotions. The present study was designed to investigate the role of devotional music in the management of depression. This study was carried out on forty five indoor patients suffering with depression admitted at Gupta Hospital, Hisar. The Music Therapy sessions were administered in a sound proof environment in the presence of a psychiatrist and clinical psychologist. Music Therapy remarkably improved the speech, orientation, memory and concentration ability of depressed patients. Furthermore, Music Therapy had positive influence on the cognition status and general behaviour of patients. These findings suggested that Music Therapy has potential to produce antidepressant effects, when used judiciously. This study provides clinical evidence for the effectiveness of Music Therapy in patients of all abilities, ages and communities.

Key words : Music, Depression, Cognition, Brain, Orientation.

INTRODUCTION

Music has well established psychological effects, including the induction and modification of cognitive status, mood and emotions. Music Therapy interventions can be designed to manage stress, alleviate pain, enhance memory, improve communication, and provide unique opportunities for interaction. Research in Music Therapy supports the effectiveness of interventions in many areas such as facilitating movement, increasing motivation to engage in treatment, providing emotional support for patients and creating an outlet for expression of feelings (Gottel *et al.*, 2003). Since Music Therapy is a powerful and non-threatening medium, unique outcomes are possible (Parle and Parle, 2006). Music therapy possesses the mystical curing powers, which can tremendously improve the quality of life of a depressed patient. Music is an age-old part of Ayurveda, the holistic Indian System of Medicine, which promises a healthy life style. Music knows no boundaries. Music can be found in every nook and corner of the world.

Clinical studies provide sufficient evidence indicating that Music Therapy works well even in those who are resistant to other treatment approaches (Zarte and Diaz, 2001). How do we now approach depression, a condition that has been identified since antiquity but is still conceptualized as a common and complex disorder of unknown aetiology? A triad of symptoms clinically

characterize depression: low mood, anhedonia and low energy levels. Other symptoms, such as sleep disturbances, pessimism, guilty feelings, low self-esteem, suicidal tendencies, and food-intake dysregulation, are also often present, because, each of the above symptoms are not qualitatively different from experiences all of us have at some point in our lives, depression is frequently not detected or misdiagnosed. The prevalence of depression is consistently high worldwide, and is associated with considerable morbidity. The disease is more prevalent in women, the female:male ratio being 5:2. There are now dozens of approved drugs, which belong to four different classes- tricyclic drugs, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, MAO-inhibitors and miscellaneous antidepressants. Each drug has a success rate of about 60%. When patients do not respond to one particular drug, they are switched to another one, usually of a different class, until various classes of antidepressants are tried. At present, the choice of medication is completely arbitrary and often based on their side effect profile (Wong and Licinio, 2001).

Since allopathic medicines attack selected symptoms of depression and exhibit adverse effects, complimentary therapies (Parle and Vasudevan, 2007; Vasudevan and Parle, 2007; Vasudevan and Parle, 2006) such as Music Therapy are becoming popular (Parle and Parle, 2006). The purpose of any therapy is to improve the physical and mental well being of a person. Decision making ability

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