

Music is a Melodious Way to Fight Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety disorders are manifested by hyper arousal of the central nervous system and intense feelings of fear, worry or apprehension. These disorders are highly prevalent and associated with substantial distress, morbidity and mortality. Music Therapy is based on the scientific use of tunes, sounds, rhythm, harmony and melody. Music is one of the most ancient methods of healing. In the light of above, it was thought to assess the usefulness of devotional music in fighting anxiety. This research project was carried out at Gupta Hospital, Hisar with the kind cooperation of psychiatrist Dr. Narender Kumar Gupta.^{MD} Forty indoor patients suffering from anxiety admitted at Gupta Hospital during the period from 1st January to 31st March, 2008 served as research participants. Both, male and female patients participated in this study. Medical history was recorded of each patient soon after admission. The mental state of patients suffering from anxiety was assessed by observing signs such as feelings of insecurity, irritability, restlessness, fears, insomnia and/ or intellectual impairment. The level of anxiety for each patient was measured by the total score of above clinical signs. Fifteen patients, who were diagnosed to be suffering from anxiety disorder and received Music Therapy showed fast recovery from anxiety symptoms and exhibited normal behavior after 10 sessions of Music Therapy. The patients, who exhibited feelings of insecurity, irritability and/restlessness at the time of admission into the hospital showed stable emotional temperament after 10 sessions of Music Therapy. These patients, were comfortable, fearless and in a position to relax after receiving Music Therapy. Thus, Music Therapy had been successful in reversing various symptoms of anxiety and improved overall behavior, mental state and attitude of the patients.

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Music is omnipresent and many people listen to music because of the emotional richness it adds to their lives (Panksepp, 1995). Indeed, listeners seem to retain much information about the music they know and are very accurate in reproducing familiar music. Emotional, verbal and pictorial stimuli are remembered better than non-emotional ones (Ritossa and Rickard, 2004). Music Therapy (MT) is based on reflection of emotions, memories and images that evoke experiences associated with the musical stimuli. Music acts as a powerful catalyst for precipitating memories (Suzuki *et al.*, 2004). Music promotes well being and facilitates rest and sleep by way of creating a peaceful atmosphere (Almerud and Petersson, 2003). Music therapy is based on the scientific use of tunes, sounds, rhythm, harmony and melody. MT also seems to increase interaction between individual patients and could, therefore, decrease their sense of isolation (Svansdottir and Snaedal, 2006). Music is a significant mood-changer and reliever of stress. Music is one of the most ancient methods of healing. Music Therapy helps to meet the physiological, psychological and spiritual needs of patients. The aim of MT is to

help patients with psychiatric problems and to motivate them to cope up with life challenges. In the light of above, it was thought to assess the usefulness of devotional music in fighting anxiety.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research project was carried out at Gupta Hospital, Hisar with the kind cooperation of psychiatrist Dr. Narender Kumar Gupta.

Subjects (Research participants):

Forty indoor patients suffering from anxiety admitted at Gupta Hospital during the period from 1st January to 31st March, 2008 served as research participants. Both, male and female patients participated in this study. The age of patients varied from 15 years to 46 years. All the patients belonged to Haryana State in India. Patients suffering from other mental disorders (except anxiety) were excluded from this study. Medical history was recorded of each patient soon after admission.

The mental state of patients suffering from anxiety was assessed by observing following signs :

Key words :
Anxiety, Music,
Insomnia, Stress.

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