

History, Scope and Advantages of Music Therapy

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Abstract

The paper comprises definition of music therapy and its importance and practice in different countries. It also includes various ways through which music therapy is applied according to different symptoms and situations. Raga treatment, Palliative treatment, Contrastive medicine etc are used under the specialization of music therapy. A wide acceptance of music therapy is needed in our country as a holistic medicine. Let it be a relief for a lot of people.

Key words: Music, music therapy, raga treatment, palliative care etc.

Paper:

Music is the valuable gift given by the God Almighty to the human race. If the history of music is analyzed, it is understood that from the time immemorial the positive impact of music is proved. Music therapy can be defined as “the treatment of physical and mental illness through the power of music.” Music has great impact on all living things.

Music or tune can generate both good and bad experience. Music therapy involves two kinds of treatment. One is for the immunity power and the other for curing the disease. But above said treatments still remain as a topic for debate in the scientific world. Disputes still exist on the matters like, what type of music should be given to both types of treatments and whether the same kind of music should be given to the same kind of patients. The taste of patients may not be the same, though illness and symptoms are same. Whatever disagreement occurs, the truth is that good music reduces stress. Mind gets delighted while listening to good music. Through the above said perspective, it can be concluded that music has a strong immunity power.

The English word “Therapy” is derived from the Latin word ‘therapia’ which means ‘curing.’ We are known about different kinds of therapy like Curative therapy, Abortive therapy, Investigational therapy, Palliative Therapy, Systematic Therapy, Supportive therapy, Acupuncture therapy, Stone therapy, Aroma therapy, Energy therapy etc. It is sure that among these therapies, Music therapy has given much importance for the cure and defense of diseases. Music therapy has been introduced in certain hospitals, cancer centers, schools, de-addiction centers, palliative care centers etc. as a relief for physical and mental diseases.

History of Music Therapy shows a lot of countries are practicing music therapy in different areas. Music Therapy Association in Switzerland is known as SFMT. In America, different voices, rhythm, music varieties, musical instruments are experimented in music therapy. Brazil and Argentina has started clinical music therapy in 1950’s itself. Music therapy is applied in mental disorders, rehabilitation, intensive care, Cancer, Aids etc. It is very useful in pregnancy stage, infants, mentally challenged children, orphans, blind children etc. Folk songs and folk instruments have much relevance in music therapy.

Music therapy got a scientific outlook in 1787, when a hospital in Spain applied music therapy. There are about 12 cases in the records of San Charles Hospital in Madrid. Dr.Kandela Ardid and Dr.Weidel Kareta have published dissertation and books in Music Therapy. Spain has started different courses in Music Therapy in 1980's and 1990's. European Music Therapy Confederation was formed in 1990. British Association for Music Therapy was established in 1958. Music Therapy Associations in Australia and Sudan practices Music Therapy in peculiar way. They give much importance to improvisation, lyrics, performance and adopt significant nature's voices for therapy. There is no life without music for Africans.

China believes that body is made up of five elements. According to that belief, five 'swaras' in music represents five vital organs- Spleen, lungs, liver, heart and kidney. Thailand, Japan and Nepal also provide music therapy for physically and mentally challenged ones.

Indian mythology and history provides a wide variety of proof to music therapy. The relation between music and prayer is deep rooted in the history of Indian Musical history. Waves of Vedic hymns have an incredible power in the transformation of human body and mind. It is found in ancient texts that music is used for self-expression and self - contentment.

Sweet and soft music gives a great solace to us. Music therapists should take acute care while applying music therapy. There are four principles in music therapy. They are contrasting medicine, similia, iso and palliative.

Contrasting medicine: According to this principle, patients are given the music that is contrary to their mental state. That will aid a wonderful result.

Similia: This follows Homeopathic principle that similar kind of medicines are given to similar diseases. Diseases can be cured by providing music that matches with the emotions of patients.

Iso: In this method the symptoms of the diseases are aggravated through medication and the disease is cured through gradual reduction of the treatment.

Palliative: In this method the disease is cured by keeping the patient in a peaceful state of mind.

While applying these methods of treatment, the mental state and interests of the patient under treatment should be kept in mind. Special consideration should be given to the various features, benefits and application of music in music therapy. People belonging to different age groups will have divergent tastes towards music. Youth is interested in fast rhythmic songs, while aged people are more interested in peaceful musical tunes.

Raga therapy has its origin in India. Music has the capacity to create 'navarasas' in the minds of people. When the song is accompanied by rhythm, an overflow of emotions will take place. The emotional state of mind will affect the body of human beings. We should take care in selecting the appropriate ragas for treating patients. The musical taste of the patients should also be taken into consideration.

In the ancient book named 'Swara Shashtra', it is being said that '72 melakartha ragangal has close connection with the 72 nerves in the human body. When each raga is sung in correct meter, tempo and emotion with utmost devotion, the desired effect will be perceived in the corresponding nerves.

Effect of music on human being is involuntary. Music will contribute various loco motor reflexes in human beings. Repeated recital of light music, Vedic hymns and melodies will impart consolation and peaceful state of mind, thereby reduces the stress.

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