

Music therapy for depression.

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BACKGROUND: Depression is a highly prevalent disorder associated with reduced social functioning, impaired quality of life, and increased mortality. Music therapy has been used in the treatment of a variety of mental disorders, but its impact on those with depression is unclear. **OBJECTIVES:** To examine the efficacy of music therapy with standard care compared to standard care alone among people with depression and to compare the effects of music therapy for people with depression against other psychological or pharmacological therapies. **SEARCH STRATEGY:** CCDANCTR-Studies and CCDANCTR-References were searched on 7/11/2007, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, EMBASE, PsycLit, PSYindex, and other relevant sites were searched in November 2006. Reference lists of retrieved articles were hand searched, as well as specialist music and arts therapies journals. **SELECTION CRITERIA:** All randomised controlled trials comparing music therapy with standard care or other interventions for depression. **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:** Data on participants, interventions and outcomes were extracted and entered onto a database independently by two review authors. The methodological quality of each study was also assessed independently by two review authors. The primary outcome was reduction in symptoms of depression, based on a continuous scale. **MAIN RESULTS:** Five studies met the inclusion criteria of the review. Marked variations in the interventions offered and the populations studied meant that meta-analysis was not appropriate. Four of the five studies individually reported greater reduction in symptoms of depression among those randomised to music therapy than to those in standard care conditions. The fifth study, in which music therapy was used as an active control treatment, reported no significant change in mental state for music therapy compared with standard care. Dropout rates from music therapy conditions appeared to be low in all studies. **AUTHORS' CONCLUSIONS:** Findings from individual randomised trials suggest that music therapy is accepted by people with depression and is associated with improvements in mood. However, the small number and low methodological quality of studies mean that it is not possible to be confident about its effectiveness. High quality trials evaluating the effects of music therapy on depression are required.

Music therapy for in-patients with schizophrenia: Exploratory randomised controlled trial.

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BACKGROUND: Music therapy may provide a means of improving mental health among people with schizophrenia, but its effects in acute psychoses have not been explored. **AIMS:** To examine the feasibility of a randomised trial of music therapy for inpatients with schizophrenia, and explore its effects on mental health. **METHOD:** Up to 12 weeks of individual music therapy plus standard care were compared with standard care alone. Masked assessments of mental health, global functioning and satisfaction with care were conducted at 3 months. **RESULTS:** Of 115 eligible patients 81 (70%) were randomised. Two-thirds of those randomised to music therapy attended at least four sessions (median attendance, eight sessions). Multivariate analysis demonstrated a trend towards improved symptom scores among those randomised to music therapy, especially in general symptoms of schizophrenia. **CONCLUSIONS:** A randomised trial of music therapy for in-patients with schizophrenia is feasible. The effects and cost-effectiveness of music therapy for acute psychosis should be further explored in an explanatory randomised trial.