

Music listening perspectives related to music medicine in hospitals – peace or pain?

Performance paper

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Disciplinary background A. Music therapy, focus on mental health and psychiatry.

Disciplinary background B. Psychology, focus on the processes and outcomes of music participation and music listening.

Abstract

This presentation offers cross-disciplinary reflections from a live music experience. The situation of conference participants as active music listeners in a live music event provides the basis for discussion of approaches to music listening, highlighting subjective and varying music listening experiences and perspectives.

The presentation outlines a new approach to music listening in hospitals categorized as music medicine. Music medicine is the professional use of music and sound to aid individuals with the purpose of regulation. At Aalborg University Hospital an app called the MusicStar is used in psychiatric patient care aiming at reducing anxiety, improving relaxation and as a sleep aid. A clinical trial has investigated the efficacy of music listening at bedtime on sleep quality, depression and quality of life in adults with depression related insomnia. The findings pointed to improved sleep quality and improved quality of life. In addition, an interview study reported participants' experiences of music listening using the MusicStar app. The study highlights preference and technology as parameters with impact on music listening. Studies were part of a Ph.D. dissertation and results are published. The dynamics of participation, including the music listeners' interaction with the music is key to influences of music for the individual. The project integrates psychological theory with music therapy perspectives, music perception and music technology. Hereby, the authors wish to broaden the understanding of fundamental listening processes that lie at the heart of music medicine and the use of music for sleep, relaxation and wellbeing. The presentation briefly presents results from the clinical trial involving patients listening to this new technology, and highlights the integration of clinical, psychological, musicological and technological perspectives in an understanding of subjective music listening experiences – from live improvisations to curated playlists at bedtime.

Interdisciplinary implications. Perspectives from diverging listening scenarios/positions are discussed from two disciplines: psychology and music therapy. Technological considerations in terms of how the software/hardware is utilized and how these technical aspects interact with the social and psychological aspects of music listening and preference will also be discussed.

References

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