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Effects of Music Therapy On Hospitalized Patients with Severe Mental Illnesses

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Previous studies reported that music therapy (MT) exerts a positive effect on many medical and neuropsychiatric disorders. The use of MT has been proposed also for patients with severe mental illness (SMI), although further studies are still needed. The aim of the present study was to evaluate the effects on a structured MT program on clinical and social functioning indices of patient with SMI, hospitalized in an psychiatric emergency ward.

The MT intervention followed the Benenzon model of MT and was delivered biweekly to 61 patients consecutively admitted to the psychiatric emergency ward. Subjects who did not complete the two-week MT intervention (N=45) were considered as the control group. All subjects were administered the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) to evaluate the general psychopathology, the Hospital Anxiety And Depression Scale (HADS) for affective symptomatology, the Clinical Global Impression Scale (CGI-S) for severity of symptoms and the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) for psychosocial functioning. A repeated measures analysis of variance revealed that patients who underwent the MT intervention had a statistically significant reduction of general and affective psychopathology scores and of symptoms severity with respect to the control group, after observation period.

Our results are in line with previous studies confirming that MT may exert positive effects on psychopathology (in particular, on affective symptomatology) of patient with SMI, and extend this observation to an emergency setting, with short period of hospital stay.