

The Power of Music in Action

Cost-effectiveness

Music therapy reduces agitation and the need for medication in 67% of people with dementia, significantly reducing the spend on anti-psychotic medication.¹

Cost-effectiveness was powerfully demonstrated in one care setting in Scotland which reduced the use of anti-psychotic medication by up to 60% in some residents when the GP prescribed a personal playlist as the first intervention staff should try when managing the symptoms of dementia such as agitation and distress.²

As well as providing value for money, musical interventions can also create a social return on investment (ROI). For every £1 invested in the Silver Lining music and dementia project, the social return on investment was £1.93 – a 93% increase.³

Psychological Conditions

In a randomised controlled trial, participants receiving music therapy, in addition to standard care, showed greater improvement in depression and anxiety symptoms and general functioning at their three-month follow-up than those only receiving standard care.⁴

Music can ease stress in both physiological and psychological outcomes. Research has shown that music can reduce stress for patients undergoing surgeries and colonoscopies, for children undergoing medical procedures, and for patients with coronary heart disease.⁵

Neurodevelopment

Musical patterns can help provide a means of self-regulation of thoughts and processes for those on the autism spectrum.⁶ Studies have found children with autism also have elevated abilities in pitch processing, labeling of emotions in music, and musical preference when compared to typically developing peers at the same age and IQ level.⁷

Because music is processed in both hemispheres of the brain, it can stimulate cognitive functioning and may be used for remediation of some speech and language skill.⁸

Research from the University of British Columbia found music students perform better in school than non-musical peers. UBC education professor and the study's principal investigator, Peter Gouzouasis said: "The students who learned to play a musical instrument in elementary and continued playing in high school not only score significantly higher, but were about one academic year ahead of their non-music peers with regard to their English, mathematics and science skills, as measured by their exam grades, regardless of their socioeconomic background, ethnicity, prior learning in mathematics and English, and gender."⁹



The Benefits of Music



Social Experiences & Challenges

It was estimated by the Big Chorus Census in 2017 that an incredible 2.14 million Britons are members of a choir. The survey found community singing is effective for bonding large groups, making it an ideal behaviour to improve our broader social networks.¹⁰

Researchers at the University of Oxford found that group singing not only helps forge social bonds, it also does so particularly quickly, acting as an excellent and cost-effective icebreaker.¹¹

Research proves that when you listen to music you like, your brain releases dopamine, a "feel-good" neurotransmitter. In this study, levels of dopamine were found to be up to 9% higher when volunteers were listening to music they enjoyed.¹²

Physical Impairments

Listening to music after surgery, and even during, may ease pain and the need for pain medication. It can also decrease blood pressure and steady the heart rate.¹³

Playing music is the brain's equivalent of a full-body workout. Playing an instrument engages practically every area of the brain at once — especially the visual, auditory, and motor cortex.¹⁴

Playing a musical instrument can help children with cerebral palsy to improve hand movement and strengthen their sensorimotor skills.¹⁵

Physical Conditions

Music therapy has been shown to have beneficial effects for the non-pharmacological treatment of motor and non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease.¹⁶ Alongside improved psychological wellbeing, the use of musical rhythm can improve gait, coordination, balance and postural control in the treatment and management of the condition. Research suggests that making music can alter gene expression linked with stress and immune function.¹⁷

Music is proposed to be beneficial for relaxation in people with cardiovascular disease through its simultaneous effects on psychological, neurological, immunological and endocrine processes, leading to reduced stress and pain.¹⁸

Evidence suggests that people who engage with the arts are more likely to lead healthier lives, including eating healthily and staying physically active, irrespective of their socioeconomic status and social capital.¹⁹



References

Cost Effectiveness

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