



The role of Recorded music in clinical music therapy practice in India



Priyanka Dixit
Research Scholar, Department of Performing Arts,
Bangalore University

Abstract

This paper delves into the integral role of recorded music within the domain of clinical music therapy in India. With a focus on diverse methods and techniques such as the Bonny method of guided imagery and Relaxation technique, the study aims to elucidate the specific contributions of recorded music in therapy sessions. The primary objectives encompass an examination of the distinct roles played by recorded music in various music therapy practices and an exploration of the associated therapeutic benefits. The central hypothesis posits recorded music as a pivotal asset for music therapists, substantiating its importance in the context of music therapy sessions. Employing a descriptive study methodology, the research draws insights from both primary and secondary sources to illustrate the multifaceted effects, uses, and impact of recorded music in music therapy. Additionally, the study provides insights into the involvement of other electronic instruments in tandem with recorded music. The concluding remarks emphasize the significance of comprehending and leveraging the potential of recorded music, contending that such understanding can enhance the effectiveness of person-centered interventions within clinical settings in India.

Keywords: Music Therapy, Recorded music, Clinical practice, music therapy process, music therapy methods and techniques, benefits of recorded music.

Research Paper

Introduction

The significance of recorded music in the context of music therapy is profound, playing a crucial role in contributing to the overall well-being of individuals. Its intrinsic qualities imbue it with a unique importance, allowing for a broad spectrum of clients to be effectively addressed, rendering it a potent and influential modality in the execution of music therapy sessions (Chopra ch. 11). In the Indian context, music therapy is emerging as a noteworthy stream within the realm of alternative medicine, gaining traction within clinical hospital environments. The primary objective of this therapeutic practice is to harness the inherent potency of music to address diverse aspects of individuals' well-being, encompassing physical, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions (Barbara). This paper delves into the specific utilization of recorded music in the context of music therapy sessions within the clinical practices prevalent in India.

Recorded music

Recorded music refers to audio recordings of music performances that have been captured and stored in a fixed medium, such as vinyl records, cassette tapes, CDs, or digital files (Doğantan). These recordings enable the reproduction and playback of musical performances, preserving them for posterity and allowing widespread distribution.

The term "recorded music" encompasses a broad spectrum, featuring numerous variations and subdivisions. Beyond its representation as songs, recorded music also encapsulates diverse sonic expressions. Such recordings may manifest as instrumental or vocal improvisations, rhythmic patterns utilizing percussion instruments, or digitally composed pieces. To gain a nuanced comprehension of this classification, an exploration into the evolution and origin of sound recording and reproduction becomes imperative.

The inception of recorded music dates back to the 9th century AD; however, a significant milestone

occurred in 1860 with the recording of the inaugural song, "Au Clair de la Lune" ("By the Light of the Moon") by Scott¹ (Giovannoni). A pivotal moment unfolded in 1877 when Thomas Alva Edison, through the phonograph, achieved the recording of the human voice. Subsequently, the gramophone emerged as a notable invention, marking historical significance in India's first recording sessions. Gauhar Jaan's rendition of a khayal in Raag Jogiya, recorded by Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone Company in 1902² (Lubinski et al. 275-303), stands as the pioneering song in this context. The trajectory of recorded music has undergone substantial transformations since that point, with today's classification recognizing it as either analog or digital (Katz ch.08).

In contemporary terms, the classification of recorded music hinges on the distinction between Analog and Digital formats. This evolution underscores the dynamic nature of recorded music, depicting a journey marked by technological advancements and artistic innovations from its early origins to the present day.

The world of music therapy: methods and techniques

"Music is a universal language. It influences all levels of human experiences. It is a medium for communication, which can be both a pleasant and healing experience", as said by experts³ (Daily Excelsior). Modern science and Medicine are now rediscovering the healing powers of music⁴ (Chakraborty 02). And Music Therapy (MT) proves to be a way of specialized use of music in treating persons towards achieving a state of physical and mental wellbeing.

The World Federation of Music Therapy defines music therapy as "Music therapy is the professional use of music and its elements as an intervention in medical, educational, and everyday environments with individuals, groups, families, or communities who seek to optimize their quality of life and improve their physical, social, communicative, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health and wellbeing. Research, practice, education, and clinical training in music therapy are based on professional standards according to cultural, social, and political contexts"⁵ (World Federation of Music Therapy).

Music is used in a clinical environment alongside mainstream medicine to help a patient attending to both physiological and mental health. It is done systematically and holds a scientific approach. The

therapist documents the whole therapy process in an orderly manner. Therapy as such mostly never happens in one session. It is a process with many sessions. The therapist works towards improvement in every session with certain goals and objectives.

However, music experiences are strategically designed to utilize the elements of music for therapeutic effects, including melody, harmony, key, mode, meter, rhythm, pitch/range, duration, timbre, form, texture, and instrumentation.

Music therapists have a strong knowledge in both of their musical skills and expertise in medicine. "Being a music therapist is an in-depth, lifelong process, not begun or completed with a degree"⁶ (Préfontaine 01). Music therapists play a very important role and a well-qualified Music Therapist should bear a degree for the same.

Different music therapy techniques are put forward below:

- Bonny method of Guided imagery
- Relaxation technique
- Drumming
- Listening to live or recorded music
- Learning music-assisted relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation or deep breathing⁷ (Fortunato)
- Singing of familiar songs with live or recorded accompaniment⁸ (Heather and Nash)
- Playing percussion instruments, such as hand percussion
- Improvising music on instruments of voice
- Writing song lyrics
- Writing the music for new songs
- To play an melodic instrument, such as Violin, flute, piano or guitar
- Creating art with music
- Dancing or moving to live or recorded music^{viii} (Heather and Nash)
- Writing choreography for music
- Discussing one's emotional reaction or meaning attached to a particular song or improvisation^{viii}(Heather and Nash)

Music therapy and recorded music

The Music Therapy Process is a systematic approach grounded in scientific methodologies, encompassing various critical stages. These include Referral, where individuals are either referred by mainstream hospital



departments or directly seek Music Therapy (MT) services. Subsequent stages involve the pivotal first session focused on Building Rapport, an Assessment phase assessing musicality and ailment severity, and the formulation of Goals, Objectives, and Targets based on empirical evidence. Following this, Music Therapy Strategies are developed, and a customized MT Treatment Plan is created, leading to Implementation, Evaluation, and ultimately Termination, marking the conclusion of the MT process, indicating the attainment of therapeutic goals and the conclusion of sessions.

In designing music therapy sessions, various factors such as clients' physical health, communication abilities, cognitive skills, emotional well-being, and interests are considered. After weighing these factors alongside treatment goals, the therapist decides to employ either the creative or receptive process, both of which can benefit individuals regardless of their musical abilities. The music therapist ensures that activities align with the client's needs and abilities, offering various settings from individual one-on-one sessions to group settings.

Within the creative process, the music therapist collaborates with the client in actively generating or composing music, which can involve activities like creating a song, participating in musical or song improvisation, or engaging in drumming. On the other hand, in the receptive process, the therapist provides opportunities for music listening experiences, employing music to aid in the relaxation of individuals or groups (Kenny). Here is when the role of recorded music comes to the limelight. The therapist, after the initial assessment has the required data to decide on what type of recorded music can be investigated. Ranging from different genres like Classical, popular music (Film), light music, fusion, folk, devotional, western, country, bhajans etc., to male or female voice, melodic or rhythmic improvisation, lyrical or instrumental music, the choice of listening to these music is opted by the client.

Clients or groups may then discuss thoughts, feelings, or ideas elicited by that music. The therapists are trained to document & follow-up at all stages.

Benefits

In the context of music therapy sessions, the use of recorded music offers several distinct advantages. One notable benefit is the portability of recorded music, allowing therapists to easily carry a diverse range of musical selections to cater to the unique needs and preferences of individual clients. Moreover, the minimal physical space requirement makes it a practical and versatile tool for therapeutic interventions.

The incorporation of noise cancellation, particularly through the use of headphones, enhances the therapeutic environment by minimizing external distractions. This feature becomes particularly valuable in facilitating private sessions, fostering a more focused and personalized experience for the individual client.

Clients often express a preference for original music, with a notable inclination towards the voices of their favourite singers. The availability of a vast repertoire of music from around the world further broadens the therapeutic possibilities, enabling therapists to tailor sessions to encompass diverse cultural and musical influences.

Recorded music also introduces a level of consistency to therapy sessions, as specific pieces or genres can be carefully chosen and maintained over time. This consistency not only contributes to the overall therapeutic atmosphere but also provides a sense of familiarity and stability for clients.

Furthermore, the use of recorded music reduces performance pressure for therapists, especially when dealing with various genres. Unlike live sessions that may involve multiple performers, a therapist alone can effectively manage the musical elements in a recorded format, allowing for a more controlled and focused therapeutic experience.

The time-saving aspect of recorded music is another noteworthy benefit. Compared to live sessions that may involve extensive preparation and coordination, therapists can efficiently utilize their time by selecting and curating recorded pieces in advance.

In summary, the advantages of recorded music in music therapy sessions encompass portability, space efficiency, noise cancellation, customization for private sessions, preference for original music, global musical accessibility, consistency, reduced performance pressure, and time efficiency. These benefits collectively contribute to the effectiveness and adaptability of recorded music as a therapeutic tool in the realm of music therapy.

Findings

In the realm of music therapy sessions, it has been observed that a considerable number of clients express a distinct preference for listening to original songs performed by the artists themselves. This inclination underscores the significance of authenticity and the unique connection that individuals establish with the original compositions of their favoured musicians.



Interestingly, findings indicate that the preference for listening to music over headphones tends to be more prominent among younger age groups compared to their senior counterparts. This divergence in preference highlights the importance of considering generational differences when incorporating recorded music into therapeutic interventions.

The role of recorded music extends beyond the direct therapeutic sessions, as it has been identified as a form of self-therapy for clients. This observation underscores the therapeutic value that recorded music holds even in the absence of the therapist, offering a source of comfort and emotional support to individuals during moments when professional guidance is not readily available.

Clients' perceptions of live music sessions as obligatory, potentially requiring responses or reciprocation, stand in contrast to the sense of freedom experienced in recorded sessions. The absence of the immediate need for replies or expressions in a recorded setting provides clients with a more relaxed and unburdened environment.

A noteworthy advantage of recorded music is its accessibility at any time of the day or night. This flexibility allows clients to engage with therapeutic music recordings at their convenience, aligning with individual schedules and preferences.

During improvisational segments within therapy sessions, the incorporation of recorded loops as a background has been found to significantly facilitate the client's experience. This demonstrates the versatility of recorded music in enhancing the creative and expressive aspects of the therapeutic process.

Additionally, findings suggest that engaging in singing sessions with the original recording contributes to a reduction in client anxiety. The familiarity provided by the original recording appears to create a sense of comfort and ease, fostering a more relaxed atmosphere during the therapeutic encounter.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this exploration into the role of recorded music in clinical music therapy practice in India emphasizes its crucial significance in contributing to the overall well-being of individuals. The utilization of recorded music proves to be a powerful approach in conducting music therapy sessions, providing a platform that caters to a diverse range of clients. Music therapy, an emerging stream of alternative medicine (Bruscia) in India, harnesses the intrinsic power of music to address various dimensions of physical, emotional, cognitive,

and social needs. The evolution of recorded music, from its historical origins to contemporary classifications as analogue and digital, reflects the dynamic nature of this therapeutic tool.

The paper sheds light on the comprehensive process of music therapy, outlining various stages such as Referral, Building Rapport, Assessment, Goal Formulation, Music Therapy Strategies, Treatment Plans, Implementation, Evaluation, and Termination. It underscores the meticulous consideration of clients' physical health, communication abilities, cognitive skills, emotional well-being, and interests in designing therapeutic sessions and how recorded music can be incorporated. The creative and receptive processes within music therapy provide avenues for active music creation or passive music listening experiences, both influenced by the versatile nature of recorded music.

The benefits of recorded music in music therapy sessions, ranging from portability and space efficiency to global accessibility and reduced performance pressure, further emphasize its positive impact on the therapeutic process (Rajendar). Findings indicate client preferences for original recordings, the role of recorded music as a form of self-therapy, and its ability to create a relaxed environment during sessions.

In the evolving landscape of music therapy in India, the integration of recorded music stands out as a valuable and adaptable tool. As a research scholar and advocate for the advancement of music therapy practices, the focus on the utilization of recorded music in clinical settings serves to enhance our understanding of its nuances and benefits, contributing to the broader discourse on the transformative power of music in therapeutic interventions.

End Notes

1. <https://web.archive.org/web/20171230055407/http://firstsounds.org/>
2. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Traveling-Entrepreneurs%2C-Traveling-Sounds%3A-The-in-Lubinski-Steen/bbee6c6cfa0eceb2cdd4833384a59dd24691e8>
3. <https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/music-body-and-mind/#:~:text=Music%20is%20a%20universal%20language,a%20pleasant%20and%20healing%20experience.>
4. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347839584_Music_As_Healing_Therapy
5. <https://www.wfmt.info/post/announcing-wfmfs-new-definition-of-music-therapy>



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