

An Exploration of Possible Impact of Drumming on Mental Health in a Hospital Setting

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Abstract : Participation in music activities is beneficial for enhancing wellbeing, especially for aged people (Creech, 2013). Looking at percussion group in particular, it can facilitate a sense of belonging, relaxation, energy, and productivity, learning, enhanced mood, humanising, seems of accomplishment, escape from trauma, and emotional expression (Newman, 2015). In health literatures, group drumming is effective in reducing stress and improving multiple domains of social-motional behaviors (Ho et al., 2011; Maschi et al., 2010) because it offers a creative and mutual learning space that allows patients to establish a positive peer interaction (Mungas et al., 2014; Perkins, 2016). However, very few studies have investigated the effect of group drumming from the aspect of patients' needs. Therefore, this study focuses on the discussion of patients' specific needs within mental health and explores how group percussion may meet their needs. Seligman's (2011) five core elements of mental health were applied as patients' needs in this study: (1) Positive emotions; (2) Engagement; (3) Relationships; (4) Meaning and (5) Accomplishment. 12 participants aged 57- 80 years were interviewed individually. The researcher also had observation in four drumming groups simultaneously. The results reveal that group drumming could improve participants' mental wellbeing. First, it created a therapeutic health care environment extending beyond the elimination of boredom, and patients could focus on positive emotions during the session of group drumming. Secondly, it was effective in satisfying patients' level of engagement. Thirdly, this study found that joining a percussion group would require patients to work on skills such as turn-taking and sharing. This equal relationship is helpful for releasing patients' negative mood and thus forming tighter relationships between and among them. Fourthly, group drumming was found to meet patients' meaning needs through offering them a place of belonging and a place for sharing. Its learner-oriented approach engaged patients by a sense of belonging, accepting, connecting, and ownership. Finally, group drumming could meet patients' needs for accomplishment through the learning process. The inclusive learning process, which indicates there is no right or wrong throughout the process, allowed patients to make their own decisions. In conclusion, it is difficult for patients to achieve positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meanings, and accomplishments in a hospital setting. Drumming can be practiced for enhancement in terms of reducing patients' negative emotions and improving their experiences in a hospital through enriched social interaction and sense of accomplishment. Also, it can help patients to enhance social skills in a controlled environment.

Keywords : group drumming, hospital, mental health, music psychology

Conference Title : ICMP 2022 : International Conference on Music Psychology

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : June 09-10, 2022