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Surveys of families of hospice and palliative medicine patients who experienced music therapy

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Music therapy is effective in aiding in symptom management and quality of life for palliative medicine and hospice patients. Most studies have looked at patients, while only a few addressed the needs of family members. The purpose of this study was to understand family members' perceptions of music therapy when they had a relative in palliative medicine or hospice. Quantitative results are combined with qualitative comments and reactions. Data was available on 50 participants. Patients scored their symptoms (pain, anxiety, depression, shortness of breath, mood) before and after music therapy sessions. One family member who was present during the session was asked to assess the effect on the patient's pain, anxiety, depression, shortness of breath, stress level, restlessness, comfort level, mood, quality of life; the effect on self for stress level, quality of life, and mood; the helpfulness of the music therapy session to the patient and to self; and if they would recommend the patient have another music therapy session. Results indicated that music therapy helped to improve patient symptoms and it helped family members to experience its effects and to perceive positive effects for the patient. This study is one of the first to investigate the effects of music therapy on family members, as well as their perception of the effects of music therapy on their loved. Although this will be an important addition to the literature, it is recommended that more research should be conducted on the benefit of music therapy for family members.

Biography

Lisa Gallagher, MA, MT-BC is the Manager, Music Therapy for the Arts and Medicine Institute at Cleveland Clinic. She is an administrator, clinical music therapist, author, and researcher. She is a frequent presenter at local, national, and international levels, and she has published several articles and book chapters. In addition, she is the recipient of the 2007 Great Lakes Region of the American Music Therapy Association Scholarly Activity Award, the 2008 Blair L. Sadler International Healing Arts Award, and the 2013 Association for Ohio Music Therapists Past Presidents Club Award. She is the former Chair of the Certification Board for Music Therapists' Board of Directors, and she currently is the immediate Past President of the Great Lakes Region of the American Music Therapy Association.

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