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# WYKORZYSTANIE MUZYKI W TERAPII ZAJĘCIOWEJ DEDYKOWANEJ OSOBOM W STARSZYM WIEKU

# USE OF MUSIC IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE IN THEIR OLDER YEARS

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## Streszczenie

Muzyka towarzyszy nam od najmłodszych lat. Z jej pomocą możemy wpływać na swoje samopoczucie, regulować napięcie czy nastrajać do wykonywania określonych czynności. Bogactwo świata muzyki od wieków jest wykorzystywane w celach terapeutycznych, bez względu na położenie geograficzne, a benefity z tym związane mają wartość uniwersalną. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu ukazanie możliwych zastosowań muzyki jako czynnika wspierającego terapię zajęciową dedykowaną osobom w starszym wieku. W związku ze starzeniem się populacji, potrzeby tej grupy są respektowane przez coraz większą rzeszę osób odpowiedzialnych za holistyczne podejście do terapii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** muzyka, muzykoterapia, osoby starsze, terapia zajęciowa

**Abstract**

Music accompany us since our childhood. We can use it to create our mood, regulate tension or to become well-disposed towards doing certain actions. Richness of musical world has been used therapeutically for ages, regardless of geographical location, and benefits connected with it have universal value. This article aims to display some possible uses of music, as a factor supporting occupational therapy dedicated to people in their older years. According to ongoing demographic changes and aging of human population, needs of this group are respected by growing throng of specialists responsible for holistic approach to treatment.

**Key words:** music, music therapy, old age, occupational therapy

## Introduction

Occupational therapy is a form of occupational therapy, using various activities among others in the field of art therapy, and in particular the wider plastic therapy. In contrast to the actions taken by artetherapeutics, whose main objective is to work on the mental and emotional sphere, in occupational therapy more important physical sphere. It is obvious that all the actions proposed to the patient also have to improve the cognitive functioning and mental well-being [1].

## What is occupational therapy

Occupational therapy in a general sense is a set of activities that the patient performs independently under the supervision of a qualified therapist, in order to influence the improvement of their welfare. This is the first difference between occupational therapy and a common understanding of art therapy in which the patient or client can participate passively. In other words, it can be subjected to the therapeutic action without getting physical or mental [2].

A frequent mistake in understanding the assumptions of occupational therapy is its identification only with easy manual work such as embroidering, sewing or making fine art works. Meanwhile, this field gives great opportunities to express creative expression in a wide range of activities that, by the way, positively affect the physical and mental sphere of the patient. It is one of the most commonly used non-pharmacological methods of influencing cognitive functioning [3].

The concepts of art therapy and occupational therapy in the common sense are identical, but regardless of the terminological disputes, it must be remembered that they are part of a broadly

understood culture, without which human life should be limited only to satisfying basic life needs. Artetherapy is, of course, one of the components of occupational therapy, but as the one that draws from the resources of high culture, it is often perceived as the most significant.

Among the wealth of classes offered as part of occupational therapy, we can distinguish areas such as ergotherapy, sociotherapy and previously mentioned art therapy. Each of them is divided into many smaller categories. Yes, in the field of ergotherapy we can find knitting, embroidery, weaving, tailoring, leathermaking, carpentry, metallurgy, gardening, wickerwork, pottery and ceramics. In sociotherapy, we will distinguish between ludotherapy, movement therapy, social skills training and recreation. Artetherapy, on the other hand, promotes all activities that connect with high culture. We will find drawing, painting, graphics, sculpture, applied arts, decorating and decorating, music therapy, bibliotherapy, film therapy, teatrotherapy or choreotherapy among them. It is not surprising that each of them also undergoes internal divisions. It is a fact that the divisions are conventional and the individual categories overlap and complement each other, and the inconsistencies in the terminology used should not affect the health benefits [4].

Szyszka emphasizes that "currently, in the majority of Western European countries, occupational therapy functions as a medical or interdisciplinary field, apart from it, the art therapy profession combines cultural therapy, sociotherapy, etc." [5].

**The role of sound in human life**

Music has accompanied man since the dawn of history as an integral part of everyday life. Already in fetal life, sounds taken by a child in the womb can bring relief or anxiety. From the moment of birth, we are constantly in touch with sounds, not always noticing their presence, or approaching their power and meaning for our functioning without reflection. For the well-being is affected not only by the fact of listening to appropriately selected music pieces, but above all by constantly receiving sound stimuli that we have no influence on. The very height and intensity of the sound can have an impact on our mood and general functioning. People who are particularly sensitive to sound may experience serious discomfort when they come into contact with sounds that are too high or too low or high.

Apart from constant contact with various types of auditory stimuli, music is an indispensable component of everyday life as well as solemn moments in the life of every human being. From such basic activities as singing lullabies or listening to music on the radio during work, to conscious participation in cultural events. Each of us is a bit of a music therapist making intuitive choices in everyday self-therapy, making listening to music for current well-being.

**The basic assumptions of music therapy**

Music Therapy as an independent branch of art therapy is an invaluable factor in regulating mood. Regardless of whether the contact with the world of sounds takes place in an active or passive way, can affect our mood stimulating, calming or by entering the desired emotional state. Since the dawn of music helped normalize the rhythm of work, to express emotions and accompanied by religious rites. In ancient Greece it created a philosophical system based on the importance of the individual scales of music, and the biblical King David used the song in the therapeutic sense.

We can use music alone or by incorporating it into other types of activity. A good example of such a practice is choreotherapy, also in use since the beginning of human history. Combining music with various forms of physical activity will always have a positive impact on human health.

Properly selected pieces have a soothing effect, affect the alignment of the breath, the rhythm of the heart and support concentration. Due to the above, music is an excellent component that rhythmizes other types of activity in the field of occupational therapy. It is also worth mentioning the so-called "Mozart's effect" which, although controversial, has many supporters around the world. It is assumed that regular listening to Mozart's compositions or the works of composers of the Baroque era facilitates concentration and gently raises intellectual abilities [6].

Interestingly, the results are not sustainable. Lack of systematic contact with this music makes them disappear.

**Characteristics of elderly patient**

Cultural therapy activities can be addressed to representatives of all age groups. However, older people are the subject of a growing interest of therapists, due to the aging of societies and increasing demands on themselves to retain their physical and cognitive fitness as long as possible [7].

Persons aged sixty and over, by WHO are counted among seniors. Due to the large age span in this group, it is not surprising that it is not homogeneous. On the one hand, you can see people who are completely functional, while on the other hand, patients who suffer from multiple disorders.

In the correct diagnosis of the elderly, the cooperation of the geriatric team, which includes doctor, psychologist and physiotherapist. Tobis underlines the lack of an occupational therapist in Polish standards, which may result from differences in the current training of specialists of this type in Poland and other European countries. As a particularly undervalued field in geriatrics, he considers artetherapy, giving an example of research carried out at the Gerontology Center in Prague [8].

Wieczorkowska-Tobis points out that "the typical feature of multi-robustness in old age is the coexistence of somatic and mental diseases. The frequency of benign and chronic depressive

syndromes reaches, according to some authors, as much as 30% of the elderly population, and dementia syndromes are diagnosed in approximately 10%, while after the age of 90, they occur in as many as 40% of people "[9]. While the influence of artetherapy in the case of dementia can be debatable, occupational therapy has a significant impact on the relief of depression.

**The objectives pursued by the introduction of music to other classes of occupational therapy**

Occupational therapy along with a multitude of activities on offer can be treated as a full-fledged part of non-pharmacological treatment. Any therapeutic directed to the elderly patient should be approached in a holistic manner to meet their needs. These related to the so-called. high culture do not occupy the top positions, but should not be overlooked.

Cylkowska-Nowak indicates the role of an occupational therapist in the process of patient recovery and the possibility of using it as a form of functional rehabilitation [10]. Długosz-Mazur adds that "introducing various types of activities not only activates people with dementia, but also stimulates the cognitive skills that have been preserved, helps to maintain practical skills, improves mood and alleviates the existing behavioral disorders" [11]. He also adds that music can be used in reminiscent therapy and recalls that the introduction of elements of music therapy is recommended by the Polish Alzheimer Society.

Galińska also writes about music, showing that it is "regarded as an emotive stimulus, allowing to reach affective processes at various levels of human functioning, ranging from physiological to complex cognitive processes" [12].

Actions taken by patients are aimed at fighting dysfunctions or forms of disability that may affect both physical and mental as well as sensory. Activities in the field of plastic therapy not only relax or stimulate creativity, but above all help to practice the organ of movement and restore fitness to perform basic activities such as shaving or slicing. Music combined with movement forms such as dance, ludotherapy or simple relaxation exercises with music is a form of preventing falls that are one of the great geriatric problems [13].

Strauss et al. conducted an analysis of the results of research on the impact of pace in music on patients suffering from psychoses [14]. Listening to music somehow forces the brain to focus, making it begin to arrange individual elements of a musical piece into patterns and diagrams. Previously, researchers have noted that using music at 60 Bpm (beats per minute) activates both hemispheres of the brain, which is important in improving learning processes. The Baroque era plays a special role, which was one of the main assumptions of the aforementioned theory regarding the so-called "Mozart effect" (although Mozart was a composer of the classicist period). Participation in occupational therapy sessions, accompanied by appropriately selected music, had an effect on improving mood, concentration and motor functioning. Patients divided into groups differentiating them in terms of stimulation or withdrawal, reacted differently to music, but a

common feature in all was an increase in attention during classes. Interestingly, music did not affect the willingness to participate in subsequent sessions. Fast-paced music (140 Bpm) had a better effect on patients in high arousal, improving motor functions and influencing the level of commands. Discontinued patients reacted similarly to a fast and slow tempo (60 Bpm).

Music in occupational therapy can be used both as a component of exercises or before starting a different type of workshop in order to focus and calm down. It is also obvious to use it separately in the form of various types of musical activities.

MacRae, in addition to those already mentioned, describes other forms of introducing music for occupational therapy [15]. He emphasizes that he can be used to fight pain, which is also mentioned by Johnson, writing about methods of pain relief in the process of rehabilitation [16]. MacRae also notices the impact of music on the emotional state and body, which occurs due to the vibration of individual sounds. Although conventional medicine does not recognize similar methods, representatives of Far East medicine have been promoting the therapeutic use of vibrations produced by sounds of varying heights for centuries. Also in Europe you can meet supporters of this theory, who believe in the salutary influence of Gregorian chant on the well-being of the human body.

**Summary**

Music used in conjunction with other activities in the field of occupational therapy can be successfully used as an element supporting attention. Not only does it relax, it also helps to rhythm the manual activities performed, and thus improve the rehabilitation process.

Despite the passage of over 25 years from the publication of MacRae, which indicates the possibilities of beneficial use of music, reviewing the results of research on the use of it in occupational therapy, you can still see a huge field of research. Available literature is not enough, and the areas waiting for exploration give hope for conducting interesting research in the future. As progress in this field, one can take away the fact that nowadays the use of music as an add-on to occupational therapy and the recognition of music therapy as its full-fledged component is not an issue to be discussed.

**Conflict of interest**

**None**

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