

Healing Power of Music Therapy

Praseeda Bal PhD Scholar in Music, Dr. Janaka Maya Devi HoD of Music,
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore.

Introduction

Music is considered as a universal language. It has profound influence at all levels of human existence. It is used as a medium of communication. Modern science is now rediscovering the healing power of music. Music therapy is a scientific method for effective cure of diseases. In advanced countries, Music therapy is an acceptable form of treatment for various types of diseases.

Music therapy is one of the expressive therapies, consisting of a process in which a music therapist uses music and all of its facets- physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic and spiritual-to help patients improve their physical and mental health.

Music therapy in ancient days

Music therapy has a long history dating back to ancient Greece. King David's curing an illness by playing the Harp is one of the instances which is mentioned in the Old Testament. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, used it extensively. In ancient Egypt, pain of child birth was reduced by playing an effective and soothing music. Great composers of Indian classical music have also attempted Music therapy for various cures. It is said that Saint Thyagaraja has infused life to a dead person by singing.

Music and Ayurveda

In Ayurveda, music is very much a part of the healing process. In the Vedas too, music has an important place. The Samaveda is full of music. The doshas like Vata, Pitta and Kapha can be controlled effectively by Music therapy. It is a form of therapy that has been followed since Ayurveda. It is a branch of Ayurvedic Science where music is used as an effective management for numerous diseases. With the help of music therapy, it is possible to restore, maintain, and improve the emotional, physiological and psychological well being of a person. This is mainly because of the articulation, tone and arrangement of swaras of a raga that tends to stimulate, cure and alleviate health ailments. Music therapy in Ayurveda states that a sound generates some vibrations that tend to move in space and in the process produce some healing effects in the human body. Classical Indian music takes the form of ragas either as folk songs, devotional songs, poetry and the composition of classical musicians for music therapy.

Advantages of Music therapy

Music stimulates the Pituitary gland, whose secretions affect the nervous system and the flow of blood. It is believed that for healing with music, it is necessary to vibrate the cells of the body, for it is through these vibrations that the diseased person's consciousness can be changed effectively to promote health. The right kind of music helps one relax and refresh. Even during the course of working, light music improves efficiency. Listening to music helps control negative aspects of our personalities like worry, bias and anger. In addition, it can help cure headache, abdominal pain and tension. Music therapy is one of the most effective ways of controlling emotions, blood pressure and restoring the functioning of the Liver. Music is capable of improving happiness, peace, health and concentration. It is however important to know the method and duration for which Music therapy is to be administered. The knowledge can be obtained through regular experiments and experience. The first step towards this is the correct diagnosis of the disease and then the selection of the precise raga that will be helpful. If children are hospitalized due to illness, they are away from school and other social activities. Hospitalization for children spells long bout of holidays from school and social activities. With the help of music therapy, this illness and hospitalization can be avoided. Studies have also proven that music tends to affect heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, perception of pain, physical health of a person and their well being.

Raga and Time

Music therapy in Ayurveda notes that ragas are basically effective based on to the time of the day, the seasonal changes of outside world and the emotional status of the person. It is symphonies of raga that produces a soothing effect on the mind and body by contracting and relaxing muscle, nerves and chakras of the affected parts of the body with impulses and intervals respectively. There are some ragas which are very attractive in the

early hours of the mornings; others which appeal in the evenings, yet others which spread their fragrance only near the midnight hour.

This connection of time of the day or night, with the Raga is based on daily cycle of changes that occur in our own body and mind which are constantly undergoing subtle changes in that different moments of the day that arouses and stimulate different moods and emotions. Each Raga is associated with a definite mood or sentiment that nature arouses in human beings. The ancient musicologists were particularly interested in the effects of musical notes, how it affected and enhanced human behavior. Music had the power to cure, to make you feel happy, sad, disgusted and so on. Extensive research was carried out to find out these effects. This formed the basis of time theory as we know it today. It is said that performing or listening to a raga at the proper time allotted time can affect the health of human beings.

Raga and Ritu(Season)

There are Ragas associated with the rainy season, Varsha (MeghaMalhar)

Raga and its therapeutic effect

Music can play an effective role in helping us lead better, fruitful lives. Listening to specific kinds of music at specific times of the day has been shown to be helpful in maintaining good health. Indian music, with its many Ragas is known to be particularly of therapeutic value. Here are some examples of Ragas and its therapeutic effect:

- ❖ *Thodi* – Gives tremendous relief to patients suffering from high blood pressure
- ❖ *Bhairavi* – Provides relief from TB, Cancer, Severe cold, Phlegm, Sinus, tooth ache
- ❖ *Anandabhairavi* – Suppresses stomach pain in both men and women, reduces kidney illness
- ❖ *Kharaharapriya* – Cures heart diseases and nervous irritability
- ❖ *Shanakraharanam* – Cures mental illness, soothes turbulent mind and restores peace and harmony
- ❖ *Madhyamavathi* – Clears paralysis, giddiness, pain in legs/hands etc. and nervous complaints
- ❖ *Kaapi* – Reduces absent mindedness
- ❖ *Hemavathi* – Good for joint and back pain

Conclusion

Music and Music therapy is loved by all age groups. Although music therapy is very effective in curing numerous health conditions, it is always better to have music therapy at an appropriate time like early morning, evening or late night to be effective. It is not advisable to have long sessions of music therapy on an empty stomach while it is always better to follow music therapy having short breaks in between. Music therapy has been existent since Ayurveda, and is slotted to be a useful form of therapy in curing health problems. There are even doctors who love listening to music while operating as the music tends to relax them, and soothe patient during the span of the operation.

References

1. *AugustAyurveda.com- Music therapy in Ayurveda.*
2. *Ayurveda-foryou.com-Ayurveda and Music Therapy.*
3. *www.sangeethagalaxy.co.in – Music Therapy in Ayurveda*

