

Editorial

Re-searching: Beyond ‘Positive’ and ‘Negative’

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It is always inspiring when new research outcomes come along and changes the way we view the usual and customary. The effects of change seem particularly profound and refreshing when they can be experienced by large groups of people, as revolutionary. Arguably, music may have one of the most profound and deepest aesthetic affect on many peoples’ thinking, feeling and can even have a measurable effect on the way we orchestrate our lives. Perhaps this is why we begin school days and sports competitions with national anthems; we are committing ourselves to our national communities, united in song.

Is there any kind of profundity or nuanced thinking that renders conceptual influence on how we set out to investigate human activity related to the impact of listening and playing? How do we set out to utilize music and its elements to foster change in physiological function?

As humans, we are thinking beings created, and the only beings to have tools, hands and feet, like animals, but as human beings, we also have symbols, derived through our words, and through our language. Our words define our experiences-and we are and must be accountable-our survival depends on it. We are the only species to have such symbols, in language and writing not only where we communicate and report our experiences-but we have mechanisms of tabulation where such experiences can be transcribed to symbols (letters and words) and subsequently, to history.

And, in a certain way, then, we are asked by most of our colleagues not to judge too quickly. This may be related to the fact that if we assume to know too much, and furthermore, if we judge too quickly or too harshly that which we *do* know, in

such apparent polarities, as ‘good’ or ‘bad’-we certainly are limiting ourselves. If information or knowledge is left, to be completely thrown out, then we are charged with not honoring human inference. This is interesting to ponder-in terms of researching.

Many new researchers make the mistake in their love of a topic, or in eager haste, not to search fully prior to initiating their own research proposals. Their search for information related to a topic may be merely glimpsed at, and not scrutinized with the rigor it should be, or in a way that would enrich or inform their forthcoming project. Abstracts, which are available for free, on-line, tend to reveal little of methodology and cannot possibly provide a good understanding of how information was gleaned, and the way in which it may have led the investigative researchers to undertake their projects. In the end, a re-searching endeavor becomes limited, and the next investigation is fraught with limitations leading to sparred outcomes.

Positive and negative are terms that imply a true and false aspect of knowledge. It may, in fact be, that we can throw out a hypothesis based on our systematic rigid way of testing it, but there is usually something more to be rendered from the process of testing that can lead toward deepened understanding. This is why literature reviews are critically important. Perhaps as essential are concise but deepened literature reviews that precede description of current studies.

These reviews might be undertaken in such a way that would assume and surmise that any such article on the aforementioned topic is seen as *critical* knowledge. This would provide a better option than merely discounting anything that did not support a new endeavor. By critical, is meant that all of the aspects that brought us into re-searching, may have unique relevance. As researchers, whom partake of such often tedious aspects of knowledge, we may find it fruitful to look beyond the numbers, and the actual outcomes (the good and bad) but rather into the how and whys of the investigation itself. Beyond if music did or did not achieve a medical outcome, how was the music selected and what led investigators to implement a music program at a particular moment? Such factors assist in the clinical regimens that will provide usefulness for working clinicians, and not only fellow investigators seeking to revamp a phenomenon and be

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favorably judged –with the primary goal to publish a paper as a first author. We must learn to deepen our investigatory prowess, and to re-research the thinking behind all aspects of a phenomenon before delving into a topic. In this way knowledge will be broadened in a way that is trustworthy and forward-thinking and reaching.

In this issue, Amy Clements-Cortes presents two parts of her multi-phase research project dealing with benefits of singing for older adults. In part one titled "Clinical Effects of Choral Singing for Older Adults" she offers an overview of psychophysiological effects of singing as well as social, and emotional benefits with special emphasis upon both persons suffering from dementia and their caregivers. As main result significant findings in her review lay the ground for a follow-up study displayed in part two "Singing for Health, Connection and Care." Here, taking residents and care-givers of a long-term care facility as subjects the study comprises benefits of singing for both target groups such as increased energy and enhanced mood.

On the other end of the life spectrum, young female migraine patients are studied in Tanvi Jha, Anita Pawar, Keashav Mohan Jha, Madhulika Monga, Sunita Mondal and Asha Gandhi's "The Effect of Indian Classical Music on Migraine Episodes in Young Females of Age Group 18 to 23 Years." Their research about the impact of classical Indian music on migraine episodes explores ragas listened to during every migraine attack in verum group as compared to a control group, who were asked to relax at a dark and quiet place. Both groups stayed on prescribed medication and followed advise as to nutrition, daily activities and sleep. Significant effects in verum group showed both reduced intensity and frequency of attacks. These findings could be a significant step in introducing music interventions in migraine treatment, while there is still an open discussion going on about using music for coping with migraine in pain medicine.

Another chronic disease entity causing steadily increasing problems in healthcare worldwide, is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease COPD, as Anuk Kruavit, Eugene Teh, Imogen Clark and Vikas Wadhwa elaborate in their timely paper about the possible role of music in improving exercise capacities among patients suffering from COPD. Listening to favorite songs seemingly shows promising results, which lead toward the need to ask for further studies on larger groups.

Active intervention in using sung songs in another respiratory disease is undertaken by Mary Gick and Carina Daugherty in their study reflecting changes in spirometry, quality of life and general well-being in persons suffering from chronic asthma. This pilot study however showed no significant differences in clinical parameters between verum and control while there seems to be a tendency for improving coping with the situation through a combination of breathing exercises plus singing. Also in this case there is a need for future studies with larger groups.

In "Systematic Review Music Making Interventions with Adults in the Forensic Setting – A Systematic Review of the Literature – Part II: Case Studies and Good Vibrations" authors Biljana Vrancic Coutinho, Anita Lill Hansen, Leif Waage, Thomas Hillecke, and Julian Koenig provide the second part of their systematic review of international research looking at active music making interventions with adult offenders in forensic settings. This work, which included 13 electronic databases, of which 28 articles fit the inclusion criteria gives detailed accounts of musical interventions help understand the possible impact of musical interventions in the forensic setting. This second part of their review focuses on case studies and the Good Vibrations program.

And finally, Suzannah Scott-Moncrieff, Bolette Daniels Beck and Erin Montgomery provide an in-depth report on the 2015 Association for Music and Imagery conference highlights papers that address clinical practice and research using Guided Imagery and Music for the treatment of trauma in "North-American Conference Highlights the Treatment of Trauma Utilizing Guided Imagery and Music." This report is a generous synthesis of GIM and The Bonny Method, reflecting how music and imagery can impact work with trauma, PTSD, and how it can serve to enrich the lives of refugees. It is wonderful to see the legacy of Helen Bonny's work, initiated in the 1970's-alive and well today and carried forth in such a compelling way, where it is needed most.

A review by Robert E. Krout describes Felicity Baker's new book titled "Therapeutic Songwriting: Developments in Theory, Methods, and Practice" as an exciting addition to literature, closes this issue.

Review

Clinical Effects of Choral Singing for Older Adults

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Abstract

This paper presents a literature summary overviewing the clinical effects of choral singing with a focus on older adults. As part one of a two part paper, this review helps to establish the framework for the research study “Singing for Health Connection and Care” presented in part two. Information is offered on the psychophysiological effects of singing; social benefits of singing; emotional benefits of singing; music in long-term care facilities and outcomes for persons with dementia and their caregivers. To date, the studies conducted as examined in this review show promising results for physical, emotional, and mental health, however further research is needed. This analysis of the literature provides the necessary background information to implement future choral singing studies with older adults and their caregivers, and serves to support the need for the study undertaken in part two.

Keywords: *singing, mood, wellness, older adults, caregivers*multilingual abstract | mmd.iammonline.com

Introduction

As the population of older adults continues to steadily increase [1] there will be an augmented need for care to be provided to these persons by both informal and formal caregivers [2]. Therefore it is important to develop and assess interventions to enhance care and overall quality of life for older adults. Singing, is a widespread activity among the adult population that appears particularly attractive to females [3,4], and is a music-making activity that is open to everyone [5]. Many older adults participated in musical activities throughout their youth and continue through adult life, and using songs from their early life can stimulate reminiscence and engagement in meaningful activity. As such, choral singing provides a platform for inclusive activity.

This paper provides a summary of literature on singing for health with a focus on older adults. It is part one of a two part paper, where Part Two presents a research study investigating the effects of singing for older adults and their caregivers for health and wellness benefits. Four databases

were searched (Medline, Psychinfo, Embase and Cinahl) with the primary search terms including: singing, health, wellness, and aging. Findings were then divided into psychophysiological effects of singing; social benefits of singing; and emotional benefits of singing, based on Hettler’s [6] dimensions model of wellness. These are outlined below alongside two further sections on the use of music in long-term care facilities and the outcomes for persons with dementia and their caregivers.

There have been limited studies on choral singing with older adults and even fewer that focused on caregivers and older adults. Studying singing and health has gained some upward focus since 2000, however studies often involved smaller sample sizes, lack of control groups and were widely variable with respect to design, scope and methods, making it challenging to draw broad conclusions [5]. Interestingly persons who were in a randomized control group study (which is often considered the gold standard in research methodology) on group singing for health promotion described feeling disappointed when they were not selected to be put in the singing group [7]. The control group- then, may subsequently render negative results, feeling let down, even in conditions where there is a wait-listed control group. It is results such as this that often make it challenging and almost unethical to not provide something that will be of benefit to all potential study participants. Many times study design does not permit for crossover due to funding, and in that way many studies involving singing have not employed control groups. Of significance is that “group singing may have potential as a therapeutic intervention in relation to long-term and progressive health conditions, such as chronic obstructive

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