

Music therapy in the treatment of drug addiction

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Introduction

Music Therapy (MT) is gaining attention as an adjunctive intervention in the treatment of Substance Use Disorders (SUD). Recent studies have shown that music therapy not only improves patients' psychological symptoms, but may also have a positive impact on reducing drug craving [1]. In drug addiction treatment, craving reduction is one of the key predictors of treatment success [2]. Therefore, exploring how music therapy affects craving in SUD patients is important for developing new treatment strategies. Music therapy promotes an individual's emotional, social, mental, and physical well-being through the creation and experience of music [3]. In SUD treatment, music therapy usually involves various forms of lyrics analysis, song-writing, improvisation and music listening [4]. These activities not only provide a non-pharmacological pathway for emotional expression and mood regulation, but also help patients to establish new positive behavioural patterns as an alternative to substance use [5]. Research has shown that music therapy activates brain regions associated with reward and emotion regulation, which may influence addictive behaviours [6]. Music therapy's ability to emotionally activate and improve emotion regulation may increase patient motivation and sustained engagement in treatment, thereby facilitating the achievement of treatment goals [7]. In addition, the non-verbal nature of music

therapy makes it a low-threshold intervention that is particularly suitable for SUD patients who have difficulty expressing their emotions verbally [8]. However, the use of music therapy in SUD treatment still faces some challenges. Firstly, the effects of music therapy may vary according to individual differences, and further research is needed to determine which patient groups are most likely to benefit from music therapy [9]. Second, the implementation of music therapy requires specialised music therapists, which may limit its widespread use in resource-limited settings [10]. In addition, although some studies have shown that music therapy reduces depressive symptoms and increases motivation for treatment [11], findings on its effect on craving are inconsistent and more high-quality studies are needed for further validation [12].

Conclusion

In summary, music therapy, as a therapeutic tool, has shown potential to reduce craving in SUD treatment. Future research should focus on the applicability of music therapy to different patient groups and how it can be combined with other therapeutic tools to improve the overall treatment of SUD. There is also a need to explore how music therapy can be effectively implemented in resource-limited settings to make it a viable option for SUD treatment.

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