

Listening to music as a rehabilitating tool with early stage stroke patients

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As part of a recently established intervention project, stroke patients are given an opportunity to listen music already at the acute stage following the stroke. Using action research and quality methods we study the reactions and profits of the patients and the hospitals concerning music listening.

Description

From a neurological viewpoint, any rehabilitation which starts at the early stages of the illness, e.g., the stroke, is the most effective. It should be noticed however, that not only the physical skills but also mental and social activities are affected. Music therapy is used to ease the emotions of the patient, and improve their physical skills such as walking, hand movements and voice produce, speech and singing. As a background on our music therapy research we have found that active playing is useful. In three years period was found that band-playing was effective in physical and mental role functioning and it was seen to improve participants self esteem and their quality of life.

The purpose of this ongoing study is to investigate the possible healing effects of music listening at the early stages of the recovery and rehabilitation process. Patients can possibly create their identity through the music they like to listen to and with that ease their mind. Music can give comfort and it can support the feeling that they have been heard and understood in the rehabilitation program. This presumably prevents the deprivation due to stroke.

The action research is about to start in January 2005. In the conference we will share the findings about how hospitals in Helsinki, Finland, are getting involved with the method. We would like to discuss various points of views, which come up with the patients and the staff at hospitals. Some patients' reactions to music they have listened to and also their opinions about the method is presented. Moreover, the prospects concerning the continuation of the project will be discussed.