

Music therapy may offer hope for people with depression

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A therapist may be able to use music to help some patients fight depression and improve, restore and maintain their health, states a Systematic Review from The Cochrane Library.

About 121 million people world-wide are believed to suffer from depression. This can be seen in disturbed appetite, sleep patterns and overall functioning as well as leading to low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness and guilt. It can lead to suicide and is associated with 1 million deaths a year.

Drugs and psychotherapy are common treatments, but a group of Cochrane Researchers set out to see whether there was evidence that music therapy could deliver benefits.

After searching the international literature, they identified five studies that met their criteria. Four of these reported greater reduction in symptoms of depression among people who had been given music therapy than those who had been randomly assigned to a therapy group that did not involve music. The fifth study, however, did not find this effect.

“While the evidence came from a few small studies, it suggests that this is an area that is well worth further investigation and, if the use of music therapy is supported by future trials, we need to find out which forms have greatest effect,” says lead author Anna Maratos, an Arts Therapist who works in the Central and Northwest London Foundation NHS Trust,

London, UK.

“The current studies indicate that music therapy may be able to improve mood and has low drop-out rates,” says Maratos.

“It is important to note that at the moment there are only a small number of relatively low quality studies in this area, and we will only be able to be confident about the effectiveness of music therapy once some high quality trials have been conducted,” says Maratos.

Source: Wiley-Blackwell

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