Scientists unlock key to the sound of blood pressure reduction in a traffic jam

April 18 2014

Credit: Wikipedia.

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) has released key findings into the effects of music on the cardiovascular system, and most importantly, what we need to be listening to in order to reduce our blood pressure in a traffic jam.

The results, published in the journal *Physiology and Behavior*, exposed groups of people to a traffic jam in a driving simulator and tested out different types of music designed to induce different mood states. The types of mood music covered four distinct types: high activation/positive (energising, feel good), high activation/negative (energising, aggressive), low activation/positive (relaxing, pleasant) and low activation/negative (relaxing sad). There was also a control group who did not hear any

music. The type of music was personalised to each individual.

The study found that that low activation music (either positive or negative) reduced blood pressure during the traffic jam compared to no music or high activation/negative music. Examples of relaxing/pleasant music included classic Motown hits such as Just My Imagination by the Temptations whereas Brahm's choral music (Opus 62) characterised music that provoked a mood of relaxation and sadness.

Project lead Professor Stephen Fairclough, based at the LJMU School of Natural Sciences & Psychology explains:

"Driving represents a common activity in everyday life where the experience and expression of emotions like anger have implications for health and safety. But this can be reduced by environmental factors, including music which is one of the most potent techniques for mood regulation. The goal of this project was to develop the next generation of adaptive music players where the playlist can respond to negative mood states that have implications for health in the long-term."

Provided by Liverpool John Moores University