Impact of Music Intervention on the Psychological Distress of College Students: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The main aim of the study was to find out whether the music intervention has any impact on the level of psychological distress of college students.

Design: An experimental group design was administered. The dependent variables were the participants’ pre-post difference in scores of depression, anxiety, stress and psychological distress. The independent variable was music intervention.

Participants: The participants of the present study consisted of 40 college students from different colleges in Trivandrum using purposive sampling method. 20 college students were selected for music intervention based on their willingness for attending the intervention. 20 college students were kept as control group.

Measures: The measures used for the present study were Personal data schedule, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21) developed by Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F (1995) and Music intervention CD.

Data analysis: The suitable statistical technique done to interpret the data was Wilcoxon Paired Signed Rank Test. The analysis is done using SPSS version 20.

Results: The findings of the present study revealed the effect of music intervention in reducing the psychological distress of college students. This clearly indicates music intervention can be used in colleges for the psychological well being of college students.

Keywords: Music intervention, psychological distress, college students

1. INTRODUCTION

College students are vulnerable to psychological distress has generated increased public concern. High rates of depression, anxiety and stress among students all over the world in higher education has been revealed in many studies (Adewuya, Ola, Olutayo, Mapayi & Oginni, 2006). Psychological morbidity among undergraduate students represents a neglected public health problem and holds major implications for campus health services and mental policy-making (Poch, Villar, Caparros, Juan, Cornella, Perez, 2004). College students need to cope with psychological and psychosocial changes that are connected to the development of an autonomous personal life and additionally they have to cope with the academic and social demands that they encounter in university studies and in their preparation for professional careers. Some studies revealed high rates of depression, anxiety and stress and even suicidal ideations among university students (Aktekin, Karaman, Senol, Erdem, Erengin, & Akaydin, 2001). Therefore, this period is regarded by many as important for developing systems and intervention methods that may prevent or reduce mental problems.

Several interventions like relaxation response-based skills (diaphragmatic breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, brief relaxation exercises, yoga stretches, and mindfulness), cognitive behavioral interventions, music therapy, art therapy etc are used widely to reduce the psychological distress. The healing force of music is known since the ancient times. There are many studies about the positive impact of music therapy in psychiatric disorders and in many other health problems. The psychology of music and emotions helps to better understand emotions as synchronised responses (cognitive appraisal, subjective feeling, physiological response, expression, action tendency and regulation) to changes in the environment (Juslin, Liljeström, Västfjäll, Barradas, & Silva, 2008). This area of research also contributes to our understanding of how musical emotions interact with key psychological phenomena (e.g. cognitions, aesthetics, motivation, performance, creativity, personality, social behaviours, health, and cross-cultural similarities and differences (Juslin & Sloboda, 2010). Experimental methods developed by the psychology of music offer sound
methodological and ethical strategies to induce and manipulate strong emotions in laboratory settings (Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008). Correlational studies are using experience sampling methods to shed light on how music can elicit complex patterns of positive and negative emotions during the unfolding of our daily lives (Juslin et al., 2008). Worthy of note, this field of studies is advancing our knowledge about the mechanisms explaining how music induces emotions (e.g. brain stem reflexes, evaluative conditioning, emotional contagion, visual imagery, episodic memory, and musical expectancy; Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008). Furthermore, a promising research direction is that music can serve the adaptive purpose of emotion regulation (Chamorro-Premuzic, Gomà-i-Freixanet, Furnham, & Muro, 2009). In the present study, the investigator is focussing on the impact of music intervention on the psychological distress of college students.

2. METHOD:

Aim: The main aim of the study was to find out whether the music intervention has any impact on the level of psychological distress of college students.

Design: An experimental group design was administered. The dependent variables were the participants’ pre-post difference in scores of depression, anxiety, stress and psychological distress. The independent variable was music intervention.

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Measures: The measures used for the present study were Personal data schedule, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21) developed by Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F (1995) and Music intervention CD.

Music intervention procedure: The music intervention group were given the freedom to select songs of their interest and were grouped according to their interest of songs. A hall was arranged for music intervention. The students were requested to reach the place by 4.30 pm. The participants were asked to sit in a comfortable position and avoid any distraction such as reading, using mobile etc. They were given music intervention for 30 minutes daily for 15 days continuously. They had to listen to a pre-recorded cd with instrumental version of songs of their interest. The depression, anxiety, stress and total psychological distress scores of the patients were collected using DASS before and after the intervention programme.

Data analysis: The suitable statistical technique done to interpret the data was Wilcoxon Paired Signed Rank Test. The analysis is done using SPSS version 20.

3. RESULTS:

The data collected for the present study, namely, the pre and post scores of psychological distress variables (depression, anxiety, stress and total psychological distress) of the experimental groups (music intervention group) and control group have been analyzed using suitable statistical techniques. The analysis of data and interpretation of results are presented as follows:

3.1. Comparison between pre test and post test scores of psychological distress in control and experimental groups.

The data on psychological distress scores were collected before and after the intervention and calculated the mean and SD. The significant pre and post test difference of psychological distress scores of experimental and control groups are tested using Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The details are given in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
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<td>3.043</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pd1</td>
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<td>7.3407</td>
<td>3.358</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
Comparison between pre and post test scores in psychological distress in control and experimental groups.
Table 1, shows that the pre-post test difference in depression (p= .004), stress (p=.003) and psychological distress (p=.003) is significant in music intervention group, while the pre-post test difference in anxiety (p=.255) is not significant in music intervention group. In control group, the pre-post test difference in depression (p=.596), anxiety (p=.528), stress (p=.330) and psychological distress (p=.425) is not significant. The further interpretations of the results with regard to the mean of the pre and post scores of depression, anxiety, stress and psychological distress of experimental groups and control groups are as follows:

Music intervention group:

From Table 1, the pre-post test difference in depression is significant in music intervention group. The mean values shows that college students those who undergone music intervention have significantly lower level of depression than those who do not undergone the music intervention.

The pre-post test difference in anxiety is not significant in music intervention group. Even though, pre-post test difference in anxiety is not significant, a closer look on the mean values shows that college students those who undergone music intervention have significantly lower level of anxiety than those who do not undergone the music intervention.

The pre-post test difference in stress is significant in music intervention group. The mean values shows that college students those who undergone music intervention have significantly lower level of stress than those who do not undergone the music intervention.

The pre-post test difference in psychological distress is significant in music intervention group. The mean values shows that college students those who undergone music intervention have significantly lower level of psychological distress than those who do not undergone the music intervention.

The results clearly indicate that music intervention have a significant role in reducing the psychological distress of college students.

Control group:

The pre-post test difference in depression, anxiety, stress and psychological distress is not significant in the control group. Though the pre-post difference in the scores of depression, anxiety, stress and psychological distress is not seen to be significant, a further examination of the mean scores of the psychological distress variables indicate that the post test scores of depression, anxiety, stress and psychological distress is higher than those of pre test.

4. CONCLUSION:

College is a pinnacle point in any person’s life. It is a transition period, marked by dramatic physiological and psychological changes. Counselling and support centres should be a part of college and they should adapt various psychological interventions such as music intervention, art therapy, drama therapy, stress relaxation techniques, guided imaginary, etc. to reduce the psychological distress of the students to improve the quality of their life. A comprehensive understanding of how college students experience psychological distress and coping is essential to sufficiently support these students.

5. REFERENCES:


