



ORIGINAL

Knowledge of students of the Faculty of Health Sciences about Music Therapy

Conocimiento de los estudiantes de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud sobre la Musicoterapia

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to evaluate the knowledge of music therapy among students of Medicine, Nursing and Kinesiology of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Business and Social Sciences (UCES) of the City of Buenos Aires in the second semester of 2023.

Methods: descriptive study, with quantitative and cross-sectional approach. An instrument consisting of 24 closed questions was implemented and answered by 61 students.

Results: the majority were kinesiology students (44,26 %). It was found that 83,61 % reported knowing what music therapy is and 73,77 % considered it safe. The level of knowledge did not show any relationship with gender, age, or profession. The level of knowledge was found to be related to the intention to refer a patient to the music therapy service ($p:<0,001$). The perception that music therapy helps reduce pain ($p:0,006$), improves quality of life ($p:<0,001$), reduces arousal ($p:<0,001$) and improves emotional expression ($p:<0,001$) was strongly related to the intention to suggest music therapy treatment.

Conclusions: students report having a high level of knowledge about music therapy; however, the self-evaluation of this knowledge is categorized as “poor”. Knowledge of music therapy treatment and its applications was related to the intention to refer patients to music therapy services in the future. Interventions are suggested to improve the knowledge of future health professionals about music therapy, to allow interdisciplinary work and to favor the benefit of patients.

Keywords: Music Therapy; Knowledge; Health Occupations Students.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: evaluar el conocimiento que tienen sobre la musicoterapia los estudiantes de las carreras de Medicina, Enfermería y Kinesiología de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud de la Universidad de Ciencias Empresariales y Sociales (UCES) de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires en el segundo semestre de 2023.

Metodología: estudio descriptivo, con enfoque cuantitativo y de corte transversal. Se implementó un instrumento integrado por 24 preguntas con respuesta cerrada, que fue respondido por 61 estudiantes.

Resultados: en su mayoría fueron estudiantes de Kinesiología (44,26 %). Se encontró que el 83,61 % refiere saber lo que es la musicoterapia y el 73,77 % la considera segura. El nivel de conocimiento no mostró relación con el género, edad ni carrera. Se encontró que el nivel de conocimiento se relaciona con la intención de derivar a un paciente al servicio de musicoterapia ($p:<0,001$). La percepción de que la musicoterapia ayuda a reducir el dolor ($p:0,006$), mejora la calidad de vida ($p:<0,001$), reduce la excitación ($p:<0,001$) y mejora la expresión emocional ($p:<0,001$), estuvieron fuertemente relacionadas con la intención de sugerir tratamiento musicoterapéutico.

Conclusión: los estudiantes refieren poseer un nivel de conocimientos alto sobre la Musicoterapia, sin embargo, la autoevaluación de este lo categoriza como “malo”. El conocimiento del tratamiento musicoterapéutico y sus usos se relacionó con la intención de en un futuro derivar a los pacientes al servicio de musicoterapia.

Se sugiere realizar intervenciones para mejorar el conocimiento de los futuros profesionales sanitarios sobre la musicoterapia, permitiendo el trabajo interdisciplinario y propendiendo por el beneficio de los pacientes.

Palabras clave: Musicoterapia; Conocimiento; Estudiantes del Área de la Salud.

INTRODUCTION

Music is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, cultural, social, and spiritual aspects. Humans are biologically equipped to respond sensitively to music, which directly relates to its applications in health care. This last element is known as Music Therapy (MT). MT is the systematic use of music to improve, maintain, or recover physical, emotional, cognitive, and social functioning. Its goal is to prevent the onset or slow the progression of medical conditions, awaken potentialities, restore impaired functions, and conduct treatments within the context of a therapeutic relationship.⁽¹⁾

MT has been shown to be effective in managing various conditions, such as reducing pain,⁽²⁾ managing stress,⁽³⁾ improving mood^(4,5) and sleep disorders,⁽⁶⁾ correcting abnormal movement patterns,⁽⁷⁾ enhancing social skills,⁽⁸⁾ and improving memory.⁽⁹⁾

In spite of the effectiveness of MT in hospital care, several studies have identified a low level of knowledge among health care professionals⁽¹⁰⁾ regarding its therapeutic benefits.⁽¹¹⁾ This is mainly due to limited exposure to this profession during their education.⁽¹²⁾

In MT, interdisciplinary collaboration is considered essential for patient treatment.⁽¹³⁾ Therefore, health care professionals must be knowledgeable about its characteristics and benefits to ensure its proper integration into the health care setting.

Based on what was previously stated the purpose of this study was to evaluate the level of MT knowledge among students in the Medicine, Nursing, and Kinesiology programs at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Business and Social Sciences (UCES), City of Buenos Aires, during the second semester of 2023.

METHODS

A descriptive study with a quantitative, cross-sectional approach was conducted during the second semester of 2023 at a higher education institution in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The study population consisted of students enrolled in the final year of the Medicine, Nursing, and Kinesiology programs at the Faculty of Health Sciences. The study sample comprised 61 students who consented to participate. A non-probabilistic sampling method was used.

The study included students in their final year of the curriculum (Nursing: fourth year, Kinesiology: fifth year, and Medicine: sixth year) at the main campus of the institution. The students voluntarily participated in the study by providing informed consent and completing the survey instrument. The study excluded students who were not currently participating in pre-professional practices.

For data collection, a two-part instrument was used. The first part aimed to describe the sociodemographic and academic characteristics of the survey participants. This was achieved by collecting information on variables such as age, gender, field of study, and nationality.

The second part of the study used an adapted version of the instrument originally designed by Grant⁽¹⁴⁾ and later validated by Amente.⁽¹⁵⁾ The tool comprises 24 items with closed-ended response options, organized into three dimensions. The first dimension seeks to describe the participant's comprehension of MT and its uses (10 items). The second dimension addressed the perceived benefits of MT (10 items), and the third dimension aimed to characterize the practice of MT among Health Science students surveyed. This dimension required respondents to select between two and seven response options in a multiple-choice format (4 items).

Subsequently, a form to collect the necessary data was created using Google Forms with the same instrument. The form was distributed to students via email and instant messaging applications. The informed consent was provided in a digital format. After obtaining the responses, the information was extracted into a Microsoft Excel database and analyzed using the Infostat v/L program. The frequencies (n) and relative frequencies (%) were calculated. The associations among the analyzed variables were identified using the Chi-Square Test (X^2). A significance level of $p < 0,05$ was established.

In terms of ethical considerations, no personal or identifying data were requested during data collection. Informed consent was obtained, and participation was voluntary. Approval for the research project was obtained from the institution. The study was considered low-risk because it involved only observational and anonymous data collection, without collecting any sensitive information.

RESULTS

A survey was conducted on 61 students from the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Business and Social Sciences (UCES). The participants represented the programs of Kinesiology and Physiatry (44,26 %), Nursing (27,87 %), and Medicine (27,87 %). The average age of the participants was 27,79 years (SD: 5,33), with the majority being female (57,38 %) and of Argentine nationality (90,16 %) (Table 1).

Variables	Categories	n	%
Genre	Male	26	42,62
	Female	35	57,38
Nationality	Argentine	55	90,16
	Foreigner	6	9,84
Career	Medicine	17	27,87
	Nursing	17	27,87
	Kinesiology	27	44,26
Total		61	100,00

When asked about their knowledge of MT, 83,61 % reported being familiar with it. However, 37,70 % of respondents self-assessed their knowledge as poor, while only 22,95 % rated it as good. Regarding the potential applications of MT, 96,72 % of students consider it to be a valuable treatment for reducing patient anxiety and improving their mood. Meanwhile, only 68,85 % consider its applications in pain treatment (Figure 1).

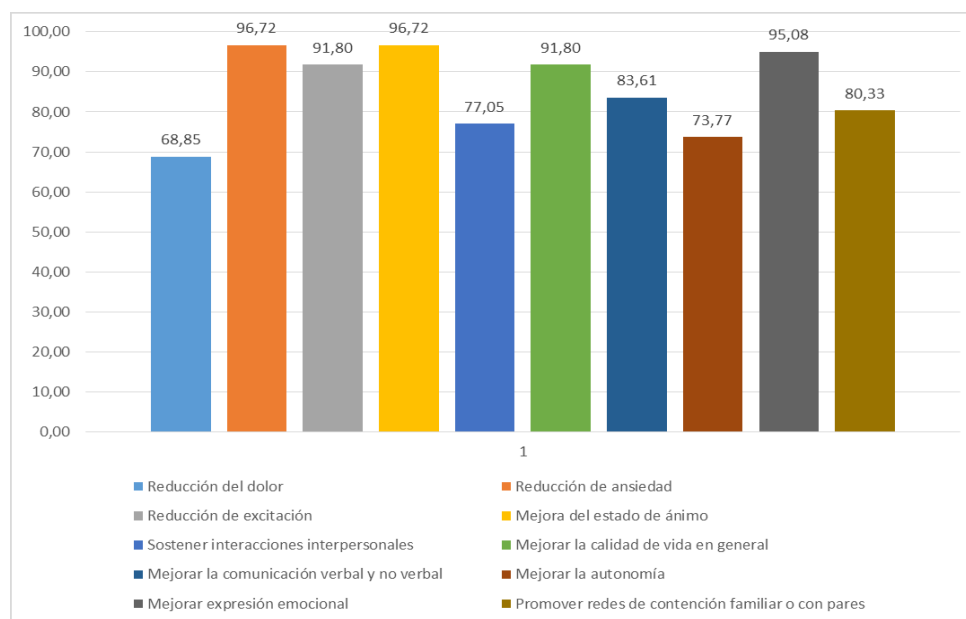


Figure 1. Knowledge about the uses of MT

Regarding MT interventions, 81,79 % of the respondents believe that they contribute to patient treatment, and 73,77 % consider them to be safe. Only one student (1,64 %) perceives it as unsafe. According to the survey, 80,33 % of the respondents believe that MT treatment can benefit patients, and 39,34 % stated its effectiveness in the medical field.

68,85 % of the respondents stated that they would refer a patient for MT treatment, and all of them expressed their intention to support the MT service in their future workplaces.

When asked about training in musical interventions, only 16,39 % reported receiving information on the subject as part of their curriculum, and 73,77 % stated that they had never received training on the topic. In contrast, 24,59 % of respondents reported studying MT outside of the curriculum, while 68,85 % did not seek additional information on their own (Figure 2). The primary sources of information regarding the profession were mainly the Internet, other health care professionals, and the experiences of family and friends.

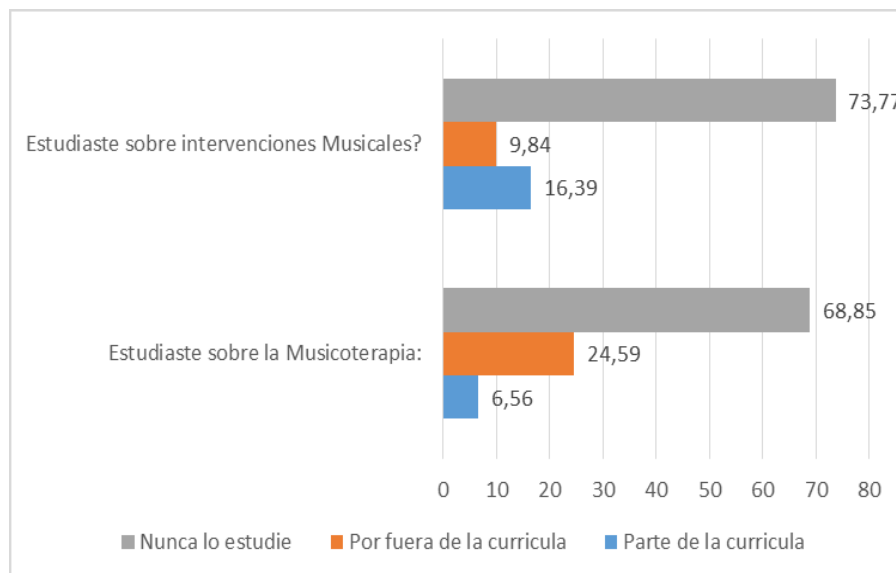


Figure 2. Training and knowledge about MT and musical interventions

Significantly, 90,16 % of the students expressed interest in gaining additional knowledge about MT.

Finally, after conducting inferential analysis, no significant relationship was found between gender ($p: 0,369$), program of study ($p: 0,171$), year of study ($p: 0,140$), and nationality ($p: 0,237$) with the knowledge of MT or the reported quality of knowledge.

It was discovered that students who reported knowledge of MT were 39,68 % more likely to refer a patient to this service in their future professional practice ($p < 0,001$). Likewise, the decision to refer a patient for MT is influenced by the belief in its effectiveness. Those who hold this belief have a 41,85 % higher intention to refer ($p: 0,008$), as well as a belief that the patient could benefit ($p: 0,020$).

The analysis of the association between knowledge of the uses of MT and the intention to refer a patient for treatment revealed significant benefits. These benefits include pain reduction ($p < 0,001$), arousal reduction ($p < 0,001$), improvement in verbal and non-verbal communication ($p: 0,016$), improvement in quality of life ($p < 0,001$), autonomy ($p: 0,019$), emotional expression ($p < 0,001$), and promotion of networks of family and peer support ($p: 0,020$). There was no significant correlation found between the intent to recommend MT treatment for the patient and the improvement of mood or reduction of anxiety.

DISCUSSION

MT is a discipline practiced by accredited professionals who use music and its elements in a therapeutic context.⁽¹⁶⁾ Collaborating in an interdisciplinary manner with other health care professionals contributes to a non-pharmacological approach that can address the general goals that the interdisciplinary team has in common. This broadens the possibilities and scope of treatments, providing comprehensive care for individuals. It has been observed that the integration of MT into current health care systems is influenced by the knowledge of the health care professional responsible for patient care. The professional refers the case to the MT service and recommends the use of its interventions as part of routine care. Hence, it is crucial for professionals and trainees, to have a solid understanding of the discipline. This familiarity facilitates the incorporation of this field into treatment. The aim of this study is to examine the knowledge of MT among students at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Business and Social Sciences (UCES).

This study found that a significant number of students reported having knowledge of MT. However, a considerable portion of the respondents assessed this knowledge as poor. This finding aligns with a previous study conducted in Africa,⁽¹⁵⁾ where half of the students had knowledge of MT. However, this knowledge was perceived as poor in various areas, such as the application of MT in medicine and its impact on the patient's quality of life. The literature commonly reports a lack of training on non-pharmacological interventions among students in health-related disciplines. The Internet is often cited as a source of information, which may compromise the quality of the knowledge acquired.^(17,18) On the other hand, it is important to highlight the level of understanding regarding the applications of MT in addressing various conditions, such as reducing anxiety, improving mood, and improving emotional expression. This finding differs from previous studies that have reported low levels of knowledge in this area. Slightly more than one-sixth of the respondents reported using MT for pain management. This proportion is higher than in similar studies, but still indicates a reluctance to adopt non-pharmacological interventions for managing physical ailments,⁽¹⁹⁾ even when emotional components are present, such as in the case of pain experiences.

^(1,2,6) It is important to note that most of students have expressed interest in learning about MT. This is consistent with findings from previous studies conducted among both professionals and students.^(14,15,20,21,22) Therefore, it may be beneficial to incorporate related content into the curriculum. The study has limitations as it was conducted in a single private institution located in the capital city of Argentina. Furthermore, the inclusion of a MT program in the academic offerings of the institution may affect the representation of the results. Additionally, the absence of similar studies conducted in Latin America makes it hard to compare the findings.

Future studies should involve students from diverse health-related disciplines and compare students from both public and private institutions in different geographical locations within the country. Comparing the results obtained among students from different disciplines would be valuable. This approach could help identify the most effective way to customize dissemination, taking into account the specific needs of students in each academic program.

CONCLUSIONS

Students report having a high level of knowledge about MT; however, their self-assessment categorizes it as poor. The intention to refer patients to the MT service in the future was associated with knowledge of MT treatment and its uses. All students expressed their intention to support the MT service in their future workplaces.

Based on the above, it is justifiable to implement interventions that enhance the understanding of the discipline. This, in turn, can enhance its integration into the health care environment, ultimately contributing to comprehensive and high-quality patient care.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

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