

# Treating Chronic Pain: Therapeutic Music in Palliative Care

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## Background

- According to the American Medical Association an estimated 100 million Americans live with chronic pain<sup>1</sup>
- 85% of cancer patients and 50% of people with non-malignant terminal illness suffer from chronic pain<sup>2</sup>
- The Center for Disease Control, the World Health Organization and The Joint Commission endorse the use of non-pharmacological pain interventions in palliative care<sup>1,3,4</sup>
- Current research supports the effectiveness of therapeutic music (TM) to reduce chronic pain in palliative care patients<sup>5</sup>



## Objectives

The purpose of this doctoral project is to improve the quality of pain management for palliative care patients suffering from chronic pain by implementing a therapeutic music (TM) program in an urban long-term care facility

- **Short term goal:** 70% of facility staff will be trained in the efficacy of TM for palliative care residents and 100% of activities staff will be trained to provide and accurately document TM sessions.
- **Long term goal:** 90% of PC residents receiving TM will report a significant decrease in chronic pain levels and a high degree of enjoyment with the TM program

Resident Number:		Week:						
TASK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
PRE-TM PAIN LEVEL (1-10)								
ACTIVE LISTENING								
CLAPPING HANDS								
SINGING								
DANCING								
SMILING								
LAUGHING								
CRYING								
POST-TM PAIN LEVEL (1-10)								
ENJOYMENT OF ACTIVITY								

## Methods

- Program site and population were identified as palliative care residents living in a low-income urban rehabilitation and long-term care home
- TM documentation sheets were created to track the number of residents receiving biweekly sessions, resident engagement in activities, and resident enjoyment
- Participants were identified by the Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner
- Each member of the Activities department received training on resident engagement methods and documentation procedures for TM sessions
- Sessions were conducted every week on Monday & Wednesday for 30-60 minutes
- Weekly chart audits and data collection were performed to ensure accurate documentation and evaluate any changes needed to the program
- Updates were provided to the Activities Director and care team through bi-monthly care team meetings

## Results

- Ten residents were identified for participation in the TM program
- Average participation rate was 50% (n=5), however there was an upward trend from 33% to 69% over the seven-week implementation period
- 100% of participating residents reported a significant decrease in chronic pain (mean 44.3%; p<0.01)
- Resident enjoyment averaged 3.5 on a 4-point Likert scale
- TM sessions were extended from 30 to 60 minutes at resident request (week 4)

## Figures

Figure 1. Summary of Biweekly Participation

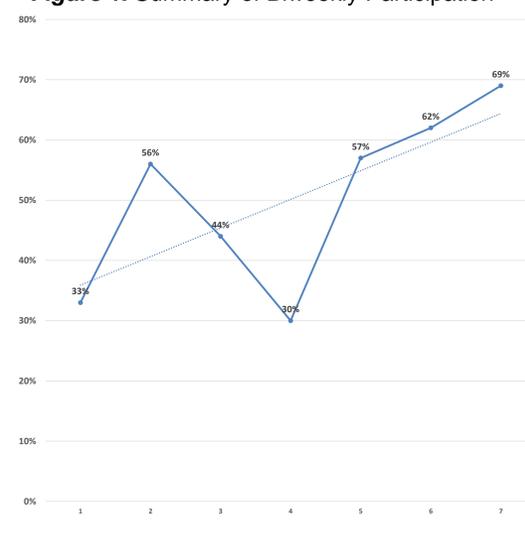
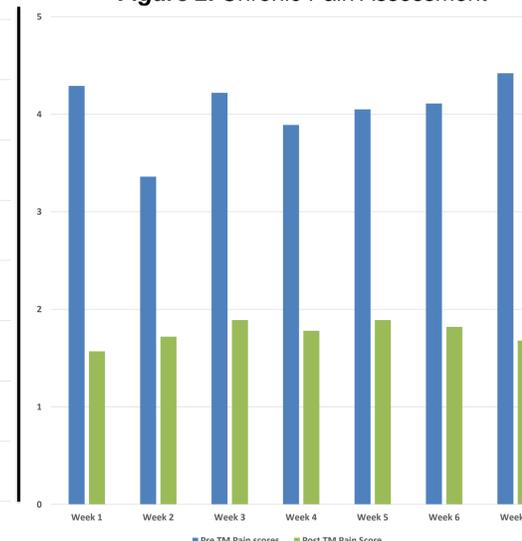


Figure 2. Chronic Pain Assessment



## Discussion

- Minimal time and resources are needed to implement a therapeutic music program
- Activities department staff are idea project champions to lead TM in a long-term care environment
- The Theory of Chronic Sorrow emphasizes the mind body connection effected by TM
- The results of this quality improvement project support the findings of current literature on the use of music in medicine

## Conclusions

- Chronic pain is a significant problem in the palliative care patient population.
- The use of non-pharmacological interventions is supported by all healthcare regulatory agencies
- This project demonstrated that the use of therapeutic music in conjunction with pharmacologic management decreases chronic pain in the palliative care population more effectively than pharmacologic management alone
- Project sustainability will be enhanced by the purchase of individual music player with resident selected music and incorporating training on TM for new staff members throughout the facility

## References

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