

OLDER ADULTS USE OF MUSIC IN DAILY LIFE: POTENTIAL FOR SELF-ADMINISTERED THERAPY

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ABSTRACT

Background: To prepare for the impending effects of an aging society, more non-invasive and/or holistic therapy methods are needed. Older adults need cost-effective, long-term methods for improving brain and body health as well as self-controlled opportunities to create joy or alleviate suffering. Music is nearly free and ubiquitous, and yet some older populations lack access. *Purpose/Design:* Survey of self-reported use of music among active, healthy elders and assess gender differences. This survey research describes usage of music among 99 healthy older adults as well as exploring potential barriers and gender differences. *Results:* In this high-functioning sample, 90% of elders reported access to music weekly or more often including nearly 70% who listened to music daily; usually for at least 1 hour at a time, and 84% reported using music to lift a bad mood. There were no significant gender differences in music access or using music to adjust a bad mood. Most commonly reported styles of music to lift mood were classical, jazz and easy listening. Although the survey also made use of some open-ended items, there were not enough meaningful responses for deep qualitative analyses. *Conclusion:* Music listening was common among this sample and they agreed they used music for mood adjustment with classical, jazz or easy listening being the most common genres consistent with generation stereotypes. Music listening has untapped potential for both specific therapies and well-being among elders and more research is needed on barriers to music associated with age-related health and/or social changes as well as the range of benefits available to older adult who listen passively or engage more actively in creating music.

Keywords: Music Listening, Aging, Music Therapy, Recreation Therapy, Personal Playlists.