



RESEARCH NUGGET: MUSIC THERAPY WITH BURN PATIENTS

This column aims to highlight an interesting topic or question that has been addressed by recent scientific research.

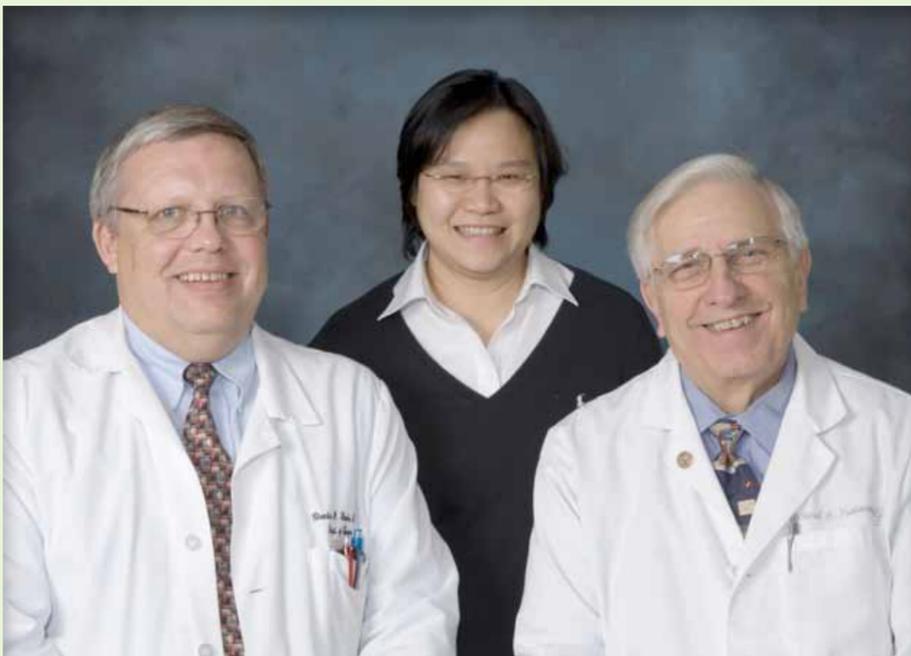
Burn patients often have to endure daily dressing changes to keep their wounds clean to promote healing. These dressing changes are sometimes accompanied by a painful procedure called *debridement* (process of removing dead skin with a washcloth or medical equipment). Daily dressing changes can create a lot of anxiety, pain, and stress in burn patients that are not always manageable by medication alone. Researchers have looked into additional ways to help burn patients negotiate this painful procedure. According to Tan, Yowler, Super, and Fratianna (2010), music therapy significantly decreased acute procedural pain, anxiety, and muscle tension levels associated with daily dressing changes in burn patients. Music-Based Imagery (MBI) and Music Alternate Engagement (MAE) were two music therapy protocols used with burn patients before, during, and after dressing changes. The goal of MBI was to help patients negate anticipatory anxiety before their painful dressing changes every day. The music therapist also facilitated MBI after the procedure to bring patients back to a more restful state. The burn patients engaged in MAE with the music therapist during the debridement process to help distract their attention away from the pain to an external stimulus, such as music. This technique follows the rationale in Melzack and Wall's Gate Control Theory of Pain (Melzack & Wall, 1965). Patients' pain, anxiety, and muscle tension levels were significantly lower on days when they engaged in MAE with the music therapist compared to those days when they were only given pain and anxiety medications with no music therapy. One patient shared with the music therapist that on those days with no music therapy

interventions, he would need at least 3 hours after his dressing change procedure to calm himself down. With MBI, he could achieve the same results in 20 minutes! The results from the Tan et al. (2010) study highlighted music therapy interventions as an effective adjunct therapy for pain and anxiety management in burn patients.

Melzack, R., & Wall, P. D. (1965). Pain mechanisms: A new theory. *Science*, 150, 971-979.

Tan, X., Yowler, C. J., Super, D. M., & Fratianna, R. B. (2010). The efficacy of music therapy protocols for decreasing pain, anxiety, and muscle tension levels during burn dressing changes: A prospective randomized crossover trial. *Journal of Burn Care & Research*, 31, 590-597. DOI: 10.1097/BCR.0b013e3181e4d71b

Reported by Xueli Tan, MM, MT-BC



L-R: Charles J. Yowler, MD, FACS, FCCM, Xueli Tan and Richard B. Fratianna, MD, FACS



What is the Association for Music Therapy, Singapore (AMTS)?

Formed in September 2007 by 11 professional Music Therapists, AMTS seeks to raise public awareness of Music Therapy in the community and serve as an organizational agency for locally-based Music Therapists. We now have more than 20 members who are all trained Music Therapists! Feel free to contact us to verify credentials of Music Therapists at musictherapy.sg@gmail.com.

Who can benefit from Music Therapy (MT)?

Music Therapy serves individuals and groups of various impairments and conditions at all ages, from neonates to the elderly. One does not need any music background to benefit from Music Therapy! However, Music Therapy is NOT a miracle cure-all. Only a Music Therapist can assess whether Music Therapy is suitable for the client.

Who are Music Therapists?

Credentialed professionals who graduate with a degree from an accredited university MT clinical programme. As credentials vary from country to country, the following are recognized: MTA (Canada), RMT (Australia), RMth (New Zealand), SRMT/HPC (U.K.), and MT-BC (U.S.A.).

What about the Music?

Music Therapists use client-preferred music, so any type of music can be used in therapy. Music is usually provided live.

Is there scientific basis in Music Therapy?

Yes, there is ongoing international research with music therapists publishing in scholarly journals, including the Cochrane Collaboration. The latter "gold standard" used in western medicine to collect clinical evidence through randomized control trials (RCT), e.g. effects of prescription drugs, is not easily transplanted and applied to music therapy practice. However, this should not detract from the positive outcomes reported over the decades. Music therapists are trained to support each client's process toward restoring, maintaining or improving health.

Is there a local Music Therapy training available in Singapore?

Not yet, we still are working on it. Please visit our website and blog for the latest updates.



Music Therapy



<http://singaporemusictherapy.wordpress.com>



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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Warm greetings from the Association for Music Therapy (Singapore).

The work of music therapists continues to garner attention around the world—from helping US Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords regain her speech after suffering a bullet through the brain, supporting children with autism towards achieving social and communicational milestones, to "awakening" nursing home residents with dementia through familiar songs. The international music therapy community through the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) is tasked with an important yet mountainous work of standardizing education and training standards across different countries. Here in Singapore, we are most encouraged by and continue to celebrate the dedicated efforts of our professional members, along with our Friends of Music Therapy to increase accessibility of professional music therapy services and funding of scholarships.

As our membership continues to steadily grow, we especially welcome Singaporean music therapists who are studying, training or working overseas, or making plans to

return, to connect with us so we can continue to lay a good foundation for the future together. On behalf of the professional, associate and student members of AMTS, we also thank you, our readers, for your continued interest in and support of music therapy in Singapore.

Musically with sincerity,

Melanie Kwan,
MMT, LCAT, MT-BC
President, AMTS



EDITOR'S NOTE

This fresh 2012 June issue has some exciting and thrilling highlights. We hosted our mighty 3rd MT community Awareness Day at the Library@Esplanade where we were energized to see the amount of interest and support AMTS had generated from the public. The theme for this year is "Sowing Seeds of Possibility: Music Therapy with Children." The program started with Choir/handbell performance by hearing impaired children from the Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired (CSHI) [See photo above], conducted by yours truly, followed by testimonials from Ms. Theseira, principal of CSHI; and Madam Niyu, mother of hearing-impaired twins. Music therapists in Singapore also shared various tips of using music with special needs children to the audience. This issue of Music Therapy Times also features one outstanding Singaporean music therapy researcher, Ms. Xueli Tan,

who has conducted numerous award-winning music therapy studies and is currently based in the United States. Check out our research nugget column for Ms. Tan's study with burns patients.

Patsy Tan,
PhD, MT-BC, NMT, NICU-MT



EVENT REPORTING: MUSIC THERAPY DAY 2012 (APRIL 15 AT LIBRARY@ESPLANADE)



(1) Wang Feng at the piano, sharing how music can support physical development. (2) Germaine and Christal using colour visuals and handbells to build cognitive skills. (3) Clara demonstrating the use of drumming to facilitate greetings. (4) Canossian School Choir performing with handbells. (5) AMTS Music Therapists: Susanne (Germany), Jacqueline (HK), Ashley (US), Germaine (SG), Clara (SG), Patsy (SG), Wang Feng (SG), Christal (Macau), Hsuehlien (SG), Melanie (SG) (6) Q&A. (7) Ashley sharing a song to promote emotional development. (8) Audience participation: parachute activity paired with music can be used to promote cooperative play. (9) MT Day emcee James. (10) Germaine motivating a young child to reach for the triangle. (11) Jacqueline sharing how music can enhance social skills.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH XUELI TAN, DOCTORAL STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Xueli Tan is one of the pioneering members of AMTS. To highlight her various accomplishments and track her journey over the years, the Editorial team (WF) initiated an email interview with her.

WF: It's so inspiring to read about various accomplishments, Xueli! (e.g. You won the prestigious Presidential Fellowship, the highest honor given to any incoming graduate student at the University of Iowa). Tell us more.

Currently I am a Presidential Doctoral Fellow (2010 – 2015) at the University of Iowa. I am a teaching assistant for the Department of Music Therapy, and will also be involved in research at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Cochlear Implant Music Perception Laboratory. A few years ago, I was the first place winner of the 2008 Blair L. Sadler International Healing Arts Award conferred by the Society for Arts in Healthcare for the top 5 research protocols internationally. I was also awarded the Arthur Flagler Fultz Research Award by the American Music Therapy Association in 2006 for my research work with burn patients. In 2008, I was featured in a book *The Science of Music as Medicine* published by The Kulas Foundation (Cleveland, Ohio). I was co-chair of the research committee for the Society for the Arts in Healthcare two years ago. For several years, I was also organizing and chairing panel sessions at annual American Music Therapy Association conferences to discuss issues pertinent to international students studying music therapy in the United States. My philosophy is that life is too short to be doing only one thing at a time; so I prolong my life by dabbling in many things at once. They are all important and welcomed affirmations for the things I do everyday. And it is good for the profession to have such visibility too.

WF: Share with us about your work in Cleveland with burns patients (see research nugget). What did you discover was the most important for the music therapist to address?

I was the clinical/research music therapist for the Comprehensive Burn Care Center at MetroHealth Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio (USA) for the past six years. Working with a team of 16 other burn care specialists, we cater to the medical, psychological, psychosocial, and rehabilitative needs of every burn patient. Pain, anxiety, depression, and isolation were the common reasons for the team's referral to music therapy. This burn center is very special in that equal importance is placed on every staff working on the unit. Each staff is accountable for and contributes to the burn patients' healing process. With music as my therapeutic tool, I was able to address patients' needs across many domains (psychological, rehabilitative, psychosocial).

Where were you trained and how long have you been a MT?

I received both my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Therapy from the University of Miami in Miami, FL (USA). I have been board certified by the Certification Board for Music Therapists (USA) since 1998.

WF: Did you come back to Singapore immediately after graduation? How was MT in Singapore like when you first came back?

I was in Singapore from 1998 - 2002; in between my undergrad and graduate degrees in the States. In 1998, there were not enough music therapists in Singapore to register as a society. I was doing some contract music therapy services with a group of at-risk teenagers, although they termed those sessions as "music lessons." Back then, music therapy was often misconstrued as music lessons, or music performance, or volunteer work using music. I did quite a lot of marketing work,

giving talks at the National Library, creating brochures, giving demonstration sessions, etc. I also focused on establishing ties with music therapists from around the region, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in particular. Those music therapists were important ones that I have kept in contact with all these years, and had remained my major allies in the field.

WF: What advice do you have for any aspiring music therapist in Singapore? And the returning MT professional who has completed training abroad?

I would say, for returning MT professionals, it would be a good idea for them to contact AMTS while they are still in school abroad to establish some contacts and set up a strong network base prior to their return. AMTS can also be a good resource for aspiring music therapists to seek out information about what the profession entails, career options in Singapore and abroad, and similarities and differences in music therapy education in different countries as they consider their choices of universities.

WF: What do you do to get colleagues/potential partners who are skeptical about music therapy on-board?

Nobody can stop me from working hard. Nobody can stop me from trying. I focus my energy on what is important and forget about the rest. After all, I can't make everyone say, "yes!" to me. I only need a "yes" from a selected few, and being able to identify those few is quite a skill. I can talk till your ears are hanging on the wall about statistical significances in so-and-so research studies; but really, our patients and clients are the most powerful advocates for music therapy. They are the ones who experienced music therapy firsthand. Their stories matter.

UPCOMING MUSIC THERAPY EVENTS

7th Nordic Music Therapy Congress – Music therapy models, methods and techniques
13-17 June, 2012
Jyväskylä, Finland
<http://www.nmtc2012.fi/>

2nd International Conference of the International Association for Music and Medicine
3-6 July, 2012
Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
<http://www.iammthailand.com>

Singapore's 2nd MT Symposium
Aug 31-Sept 1, 2012
For event details and updates, please see <http://singaporemusictherapy.blogspot.com>

2nd International Health Humanities Conference – Music, Health, and Humanity
9-11 August, 2012
Montclair State University, New Jersey, U.S.A.
<http://www.mediconvention.com/>

38th Australian Music Therapy Association National Conference – Connectedness and Resilience
15-16 September 2012
Haymarket, NSW, Australia
<http://www.austmta.org.au/conf/>

NZSM Music Therapy Conference 2012 – Music and the Brain: Developing Pathways
22-23 September, 2012
Auckland, New Zealand
<http://www.musictherapy.org.nz/category/events/mthnz-conference/>

XIV Annual Conference of the American Music Therapy Association – Changing Winds: Innovation in Music Therapy
11-14 October, 2012
St. Charles, Illinois, U.S.A.
http://www.musictherapy.org/events/amta_2012_conference_changing_winds_innovation_in_music_therapy/