



# Effectiveness of music therapy in improving cognitive function in patients suffering from early-stage dementia



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dementia is a syndrome characterized by **cognitive impairment**, suffered by 55 million people.<sup>1,2</sup>

Currently, treatment focuses on improving symptoms. However, it does not reverse cognitive decline. Non-pharmacological treatments, such as **Music Therapy (MT)**, seem to have some efficacy in slowing the progression of deterioration. Music can be used to prevent cognitive deterioration causing no side effects.<sup>3,4</sup>

**Nurses** working in the healthcare field should be certified to offer this intervention to their patients in order to help them stop the progression of their disease. In addition, it is important to include this intervention early in the course of the disease to slow cognitive decline before it becomes severe.

## 2. AIM

To find evidence through scientific research on how music therapy affects cognitive function.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Is music therapy effective in improving cognitive function in patients suffering from early-stage dementia?



Population	Intervention	Situation
Dementia, Alzheimer, Memory loss, Cognitive impairment	Music therapy, Alternative therapy, Complementary therapy	Cognitive function, Cognition
AND	AND	AND
OR	OR	OR
Dementia [MeSH], Alzheimer [MeSH]	Music therapy [MeSH]	Cognition [MeSH]

## 4. RESULTS

### - Music-Based Interventions (MBI):



- Cognitive function: Mini-Mental State Examination scores increase specially with active interventions. There is some controversy in the duration of the effects.<sup>5-10</sup>



- Memory and language: Episodic, Working and Semantic memory are improved with MT, as well as short-term recall function. The effect is immediate and long-lasting.<sup>5-11</sup>

- Complex attention: attention is needed in order to perform the MT session.<sup>7,9</sup>

- Executive function: is improved through optimization of socialization skills, speech processing and engagement.<sup>8-10</sup>

- Orientation: improves specially in mild dementia and is maintained for long periods of time.<sup>6,9-11</sup>

- Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia: MT reduces depression and improves mood and behavioral alterations. It also helps achieve emotional balance and reduce the psychological burden on the relatives. However the effect may be short-lived.<sup>5,6,9-11</sup>



## 5. CONCLUSION

Music therapy slows the deterioration and symptoms of dementia. Allowing the patient to choose the music and taking into account their personal opinions a greater emotional bond is created. As nurses, we must create a trusting environment in which the patient feels comfortable to express their feelings and emotions, to ensure that they receive individualized care according to their needs.

This review provides relevant information to improve the care of patients with dementia, providing them with a holistic care that meets all their needs. In addition, introducing a holistic care approach in educational programs will enable future professionals to provide better quality care.

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY



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