



## Music therapy as a therapeutic tool and its interfaces with pediatric nursing

### A musicoterapia como ferramenta terapeutica e suas interfaces da com a enfermagem pediátrica

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Music in its historical context is part of the life of the human being. Its comprehension, perception and understanding goes beyond technological advancement, even if one considers the technical and scientific evolution of humanity, the mysteries related to musicality are indecipherable, since it is an exclusive perception of the human species. It is present in all cultural axes, so in the hospital environment it is a very powerful therapeutic tool, but the practice in nursing intervention can be considered a powerful instrument in the humanization of care. It is capable of relaxing, cheering up and motivating individuals, because hardly a child is indifferent to a song. A musical arrangement has great power as a connecting link between people, in this case, reaching the deepest fibers of the soul, building an empathetic relationship between them. In this way, harmony and sound vibrations resonate and provide transformation, balance, and healing, resulting in smiles, affection, therapeutic touch, as well as transmission of security, peace, and encouragement. As art, music has a great emotional impact because it involves people in the energy that the artist has put into the work. It ends up motivating the patient to feel other emotions from a musical interaction, reverberating in various spheres of the hospital and that is why music expands people's communication and sensitivity, in a coherent way with the place, respecting the specificities of the hospital, musical harmony can add positively to pediatric nursing care.

**Objective:** To analyze the effects of music therapy on the praxis of nursing care for pediatric patients, with a view to humanizing care.

**Method:** the study has a qualitative methodological approach, of an explanatory descriptive nature, through the integrative literature review (RIL) on national and international publications in journals of representativeness in the field of nursing, indexed to the virtual database within the period delimited for this research, in the years 2016 to 2021.

**Results:** A total of 50 articles were obtained, of which 5 were included in this review because they met the research objective. Divided into five categories: humanization and music therapy, music therapy as a therapeutic tool; music therapy in the pediatric inpatient unit; music therapy in the neonatal inpatient unit; and music therapy in the pediatric oncology unit.

**Final considerations:** music therapy, as a humanization tool, provides great benefits to hospitalized children who often go through periods of anxiety, anguish, stress, fear and suffering. The children assisted under the intervention of music have the possibility to reflect on existential meanings that help them to strengthen themselves, achieving internal changes that coping with the disease provides. The use of this tool by the nursing team is still a challenge, requiring greater awareness, because although some advances in the area have occurred, it is still contested by health professionals who are



unaware of its therapeutic actions and methods. Since, the hospital should be a space for human development, focused on welcoming and promoting individualized and humanized health.

**Keywords:** Music therapy, Humanization, Pediatric nursing.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Music in its historical context is part of the life of the human being. Their comprehension, perception, and understanding goes beyond technological advancement, it can vary from person to person. Even if one considers the technical and scientific evolution of humanity, the mysteries related to music are indecipherable, since it is an exclusive perception of the human species. It is present in all cultural axes of Brazil and the world, and the studies addressed in this literature review indicate that it precedes the forms of language.

Namely, that this form of expression and art increasingly fulfills the diverse needs of the human being. Melody, sound, rhythm, and harmony are very old therapeutic resources. Since its existence, music has been expressed without the use of musical instruments, based on sounds emitted by the voice, pre-existing to all musical instruments.

According to Ferreira (2016), with the intention of qualifying nursing care, meeting the National Humanization Policy (NHP) and with the purpose of meeting the physiological, psychological, and spiritual needs of pediatric patients, music therapy was implemented as a possibility to welcome, individualize, and humanize the pediatric hospital environment.

According to Maria (2015), the NHP emerged in 2003, and some proposals were launched with the aim of changing the current model of care and management, which had been worn out for a long time. Fully involved with the SUS, the PNH created problematizations about the concept of humanization, instigated major debates such as the analysis of the National Program for the Humanization of Hospital Care created in 2001.

According to Benevides and Passos (2005), the word humanization was understood until then as fractional health practices, linked to voluntarism, assistentialism and paternalism, with the "good human" as the central idea. For the creators of the NHP, the idea of humanization is not restricted only to humanitarian actions, it is much broader, it is the inclusion of different subjects: managers, workers and users as protagonists, co-responsible and in the production of autonomy. Inclusion of social analyzers and collective inclusion. The expected effect of this inclusion is to reduce queues and waiting times, welcoming care based on risk criteria, guarantee users' rights, and value health work. The Ministry of Health believes in raising awareness among other segments and making humanization a Public Health Policy.



COFEN (2017) defines the main fundamentals of Nursing as follows: "Nursing is committed to the production and management of care provided in different socio-environmental and cultural contexts in response to the needs of the person, family and collectivity."

Nursing professionals act autonomously and in line with ethical and legal, technical-scientific and theoretical-philosophical precepts; performs its activities with competence for the promotion of the human being in its entirety, in accordance with the Principles of Ethics and Bioethics, and participates as a member of the Nursing and health team in the defense of Public Policies, with emphasis on health policies that guarantee universal access, comprehensiveness of care, problem-solving, preservation of people's autonomy, community participation, hierarchization and political-administrative decentralization of health services.

Nursing care is based on the knowledge of the profession and on the human, social and applied sciences and is performed by professionals in the social and daily practice of assisting, managing, teaching, educating and researching." COFEN (2017).

For Silva (2020), the social and therapeutic value of art applied to medicine is already recognized in health institutions around the world and the desire to address it is growing. In the hospital environment, various forms of artistic expression are created and developed, from the oldest such as painting, theater and music to one of the most current. Art can also be a great therapeutic resource in any area of knowledge, working on the expression of feelings and emotions, rescuing the human being in its entirety.

According to Ferreira (2006), for children who are already physically and emotionally affected by the disease, the hospital means a great distance from their family, from their daily lives, from their home, where their social and emotional development takes place. In view of this, there is a clear need to humanize pediatric care, as well as to create and implement projects valuing art, especially music as a therapeutic resource.

Hatem et al. (2006) state that it is possible to observe the anxiolytic effects of music on children's health care. The efficacy of music therapy as a non-pharmacological intervention resource to minimize pain and suffering, promoting health and improved well-being, has been increasingly discussed. Harmonic music provides positive effects such as tranquilizing, sleeping pills, anti-stress, analgesic, balancing the metabolism. Its influence is observed on heart and respiratory rate, blood pressure, muscle tone, thermal balance, suggestibility of fear, blood volume, peripheral perfusion, activating the production of endorphins in the body.

One of the most effective ways to promote balance, the emotional, physiological, and spiritual state of the human being is through music. Almost every organ and system in the body is



affected by it. In addition to the benefits in the context of biopsychosocial well-being, a sensation that allows the child to relive playful and pleasurable situations from memories that are awakened by sound, helping in self-knowledge. There is a link between music and the restoration of health and the harmonic melody, which works as a therapeutic tool within the pediatric hospitalization unit, considerably reducing the level of anxiety and stress of hospitalized patients, strengthening the immune system, relieving pain. As music communicates directly to the limbic system, which is largely responsible for emotions, motivation and affectivity, it is important to motivate discussions that instigate different practices within the hospital environment (DILEO, 2005).

For Leão (2004), music in the hospital environment is a very powerful therapeutic tool, therefore, the practice in nursing intervention can be considered a powerful instrument in the humanization of care. Music is able to relax, cheer up, and motivate individuals. Hardly a child is indifferent to a song. A musical arrangement has great power as a vehicle of connection between human beings, in this case, patient and caregiver, reaching the deepest fibers of the soul, thus building a relationship of empathy between both. In this way, harmony and sound vibrations resonate and provide transformation, balance, and healing, resulting in smiles, affection, therapeutic touch, and the intention to convey tranquility, peace, and encouragement.

## **2 RATIONALE**

As an art form, music makes a great emotional impact, because it involves people in the energy that the artist has put into the work. It ends up motivating the patient to feel other emotions from a musical interaction, reverberating in various spheres of the hospital and that is why music expands people's communication and sensitivity.

Based on the principle that musicality is human, this study is justified, based on its benefit, a period of recovery of the child's health. Considering that the hospital should be a welcoming place, where the sound relationship can favor the well-being of all. Consistent with the place, respecting the specificities of the hospital, musical harmony can add positively to pediatric nursing care.

## **3 OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To analyze the effects of music therapy on the praxis of nursing care for pediatric patients, with a view to humanizing care.



### 3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Understand music therapy and its relationship with children's health and its historical aspects.

Associate music in the promotion of physical and mental health.

To relate music as a therapeutic tool in the application of HumanizaSUS public policies.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

The study has a qualitative methodological approach, of an explanatory descriptive nature, through the integrative literature review (RIL) on national and international publications in journals of representativeness in the field of nursing, indexed to the virtual database, within the period delimited for this research, in the years 2016 to 2021. To this end, inclusion criteria based on combinations of keywords were used, to specify the research, whose descriptors: "Music Therapy"; "Humanization"; "Pediatric Nursing"; "Humanization"; "Pediatric Nursing",) that are indexed in DeCS (Health Sciences Descriptors), with the use of the AND operator, filtering the results in free systematic reviews published in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

In the selection of articles, the types of studies were used: systematic review with meta-analysis and randomized clinical trials, and guidelines for pediatric nursing and humanization. A total of 50 articles were obtained, of which 5 were included in this review (articles in the Brazilian Journal of Health Review, in Scielo, articles in the Interinst Journal and articles in Cientifica Fagoc Saúde), since they met the objective of the research, with the purpose of analyzing the state of the art in relation to scientific knowledge regarding therapeutic music. its benefits and results in the nursing care of pediatric patients, and articles not pertinent to the theme were excluded after screening the title of the abstract, then screening the full text and exclusion of repeated texts.

According to Mendes (2008), the integrative literature review is a form of research that uses different references on the subject as a source of data. It includes the analysis and critical appraisal of relevant research that supports decision-making and practice improvement. In addition, it enables a summary of the related evidence, and the verification of the state of knowledge on a given topic, observing gaps and needs for research, studies and future investigations on the subject.



## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Table 1 - Articles included in the analysis. Teresópolis. Rio de Janeiro. Brazil. Unifeso. 2022.

Author	Magazine/Database	Methodology	Evidence
Júlio Cesar Pinto de Souza Carlos Justino Ferreira Neto Josenira Catique Pereira	Contributions of Music Therapy to Child Psychotherapy /Brazilian Journal of Health Review	Bibliographic Procedure and Qualitative Approach	In the research, it was found that the resource of music therapy is widely used in many contexts, such as the clinic, school and community, being applied in different environments, with different objectives and at all ages
Alexandre Gonzaga dos Anjos Caroline Daniel Montanhaur Érico Bruno Viana Campos Ana Luiza Ribeiro Pereira Dias Piovezana Joana Santos Montalvão Carmen Maria Bueno Neme	Music therapy as a strategy of psychological intervention with children: a review of the literature / General, Rev. Interinst. [online]. vol.10 no.2 Belo Horizonte Dec. 2017	Exploratory Literature Review	Within the limits of the present study, it was possible to verify the value of music and its role as a therapeutic resource in children, demonstrating that it is an alternative modality of intervention, and the scarcity of recent studies in the country related to the theme, which corroborates the position that it should be more widespread and researched in Brazil.
Daiana Isabel da Silva Rodrigues Gisele Aparecida Fófano Livia Lopes Barreiros Camila Soares Furtado Couto Cristiane Ferrari Vieira Maria Augusta Andrade Coutinho de Oliveira	The use of Music Therapy in the Care of Preterm Infants Hospitalized in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A Literature Review / Revista Científica Fagoc Saúde	Bibliographic Research	"Music therapy has been considered and used, aiming at better results in the recovery, development and growth of babies. The beneficial effect of music, properly applied, on the stabilization of vital data, on the adequacy of the sleep/wake state, on the food transition, on weight gain, on stress reduction, on interaction with the environment, on psychological and cognitive development, in addition to the well-being evidenced by facial expressions of pleasure and vocalization, was verified."
Karla Gualberto Silva Gunnar Glauco de Cunto Taets Leila Brito Bergold	The use of music in a pediatric unit: contributing to hospital humanization / Revista Uerj	Exploratory Research	"Music can contribute to hospital humanization in pediatrics, having applicability for children in different age groups, providing pleasure and reducing anxiety and promoting health in the hospital environment."



Lara Adrienne Garcia Paiano da Silva Fátima Denise Padilha Baran Nen Nalú Alves das Mercês	Music in the care of children and adolescents with cancer: an integrative review / Scielo	Integrative Literature Review	"Music contributes to strengthening bonds, being a facilitating resource in communication between patients and their families, as well as with the health team, providing comprehensive, individualized and humanized care."
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Source: prepared by the author (2022).

## 6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 HUMANIZATION AND MUSIC THERAPY

According to Baremlitt (2001), humanization means donation for the common good, practicing any act giving human condition, humanizing in an affable way, observing the human being in its completeness. In antiquity and in the modern age, man was inserted in a structure of non-humanized relationships, without much meaning. For the evolution of humanity, interpersonal relationships are not perceived as fundamental. In the contemporary age, to humanize is to grant, distribute, and extend benefits such as housing, clothing, and education to human beings. Throughout history, humanization has become a highlight of discussions about health, with greater appreciation, being referred to as a good above any argumentation.

In nursing, humanization is the way of looking at the patient by observing him completely, in a more integrated perspective, not only in issues related to his illness. It is important that nurses better understand the patient's speech, complaints, feelings, and doubts, so that they can intervene in a welcoming way, providing comfort and reducing their suffering. The way of communicating through non-verbal sign language is an important issue to be observed, as it is an indirect way for the patient to express their emotions. Favoring care for hospitalized people, considering psychological, social, and religious issues, among other aspects that affect the patient's prognosis, is one of the foundations of humanization in nursing. Inside and outside the hospital, humanization should be a practice in all health care (Collet, 2003).

According to Ballone (2014), humanizing health care means giving a voice to patients and professionals, so that they can be inserted in an atmosphere of respect, dignity, solidarity, and empathy. Humanization without communication is something unfeasible, without being based on speech and listening among human beings, therefore, it is an affective form of communication, of knowledge of the individual in his totality.

The art of music, according to Silva (2008), is one of the oldest forms of communication that sharpens sensitivity and emotions. Music, with its own form of communication, is inherent to



the human condition, being present in all cultures throughout history, even used as a therapeutic resource based on the knowledge of man and his evolution.

According to Gualberto et al. (2017), the use of music is a way to promote health, comfort, and improve relationships in the hospital environment, making care more humanized. It is necessary to articulate actions, new practices, knowledge and methods to enhance significant changes in welcoming care and well-being in the hospital, always thinking about the uniqueness of the subject, in the health-disease process. The same author praises deeper nursing care processes, going beyond traditional formats, using music as a mediator in interpersonal relationships, sustaining its use as a humanized therapeutic practice.

As stated by Bruscia (2003), music therapy is the use of sound elements with groups or patients promoting communication, expression of feelings with therapeutic objectives, satisfying cognitive, emotional, mental and social needs. In several hospital contexts, music therapy has a great contribution to promoting well-being, reducing the effects of hospitalization, and becoming a practice related to care.

## 6.2 MUSIC THERAPY AS A THERAPEUTIC TOOL

Since ancient times, music has been used as therapy, manifesting itself in many cultures to treat the sick. Melody, rhythm, sound, and harmony are very old therapeutic resources. Guazina and Tittone (2019) state that music therapy is a field of knowledge with specific training and is characterized using music to seek to rescue health or facilitate treatment. Music not only changes the way we interact, but it has significant elements for the study of emotions.

According to neuroscience, the brain of those who experience music works differently from those who do not. Those who live this experience have greater emotional control, better communication, attention, concentration, well-being and good mood. If the meaning of music is related to a certain context, music therapy provides new possibilities for action. The experience of listening to music encompasses emotional and physical aspects, it is capable of awakening feelings, reliving memories (Levitin, 2010).

According to Muszkat (2009), when music becomes part of affective memory, it acts by stimulating structures of the limbic system, which is responsible for emotional self-regulation. The thrill of listening to music activates brain circuits releasing dopamine and serotonin, the pleasure neurotransmitters related to mood, relaxation, and pain relief. In the health area, music therapy is seen as a powerful therapeutic tool, capable of bringing many benefits such as reducing stress and anxiety, also providing motivation and emotional strengthening in the face of difficult situations.





Souza et al. (2021) report that music therapy was already used in ancient Greece to treat various diseases. Medicine used music as a soothing agent for the sick in order to alleviate pain and suffering. Music therapy has long been considered an excellent device to provide more quality of life, well-being, contributing to the improvement of the human being as a whole, but it was only in the 40s that the first scientific studies appeared. When conducted properly, music is much more than simple sound waves emitted in the environment, becoming an instrument of intervention that provides the patient with the enhancement of all their abilities in a pleasurable way. According to the authors, music therapy has become a therapeutic technique with excellent results in the treatment of sick patients of all ages, especially children. In the hospital, it is possible to perceive a great link between music and psychology in the sphere of health. With its playful presence within the hospital, music provides calm, relaxation and tranquility. There is a great deal of psychological suffering on the part of children related to illness, anguish and fear related to social losses. Music is able to emotionally involve children, alleviating bad feelings, providing physical and mental relaxation.

### 6.3 MUSIC THERAPY IN THE PEDIATRIC INPATIENT UNIT

Ferreira (2006) states that in all stages of life, hospitalization is a difficult phase. For children, this process is much more complex due to the suffering of illness, anxiety, fears, the feeling of threat in the face of the unknown, the distance from family, friends from school, and from their daily lives. The child experiences very stressful situations in the hospital that cause impacts on their emotions, so their pain should be observed and evaluated in a singular way, with a special and welcoming look by the nursing team.

Music, according to the author, provides many benefits in the pediatric hospital environment, favoring a light environment for the child, enabling the expression of feelings such as joy, well-being, enthusiasm, and the change in their emotional state. The use of music improves the vital signs of pediatric patients, humanizing the treatment, bringing the family environment to the Hospital.

The use of musical activities in health contexts, especially in pediatrics, is in line with a more humanized proposal in which it is proposed to focus on care related to the treatment, the disease and the psychological aspects of the patient. The intervention of the music therapist can take place directly or indirectly, depending on the moment and need. It is the therapist who defines which activities will be addressed directly, while in the indirect form the activities and music are proposed by the patient himself. The most used activities with children inside the hospital are



improvisations with the voice, musical games, manipulation of instruments, listening to songs and singing them. All musical activities, in addition to developing children's creativity, enable the work of new social and communication skills, the reduction of physical and emotional symptoms of diseases, better acceptance of hospitalization and its consequences (Gonzaga et al., 2017).

Music therapy provides entertainment and good moments, diverting the focus from unpleasant symptoms, making the child forget moments of suffering. Integrating a set of its own practices, music therapy as a therapeutic resource has shown excellent results in the care of hospitalized children, assisting treatments in pediatric units in the short or long term. Music has great value and an important role as an alternative therapeutic treatment in children, proving to be an effective intervention modality. (Benenzon, 1988).

#### 6.4 MUSIC THERAPY IN THE NEONATAL INPATIENT UNIT

Premature babies, due to immaturity of the respiratory and central nervous systems, low birth weight and perinatal conditions, require special care. The hospitalization of babies in the neonatal ICU is distressing, especially when it is not possible to predict the length of stay of the baby in the hospital. Parents experience emotional turmoil due to separation anxiety and are often faced with an unwelcoming, hostile, and uncomfortable hospital environment. After the delivery process, when the mother is discharged from the hospital, this moment is not experienced with relief due to the fear of losing her baby who needs hospitalization (Oliveira et al., 2013).

Hospitalization in the neonatal ICU generates painful and stressful sensations for the newborn, who is submitted to several exams, interventions and procedures. For the assertive use of music therapy in hospitalization, it is essential to have a deep knowledge of this art, that is, the appropriate technique for the time of exposure of children to sound stimulus, taking into account the volume, frequent evaluation, intervention and progress achieved. The frequency of sound waves must obey the volume limit so that it is comfortable for babies, providing physiological and psychological benefits (Rodrigues et al., 2018).

Silva et al. (2013) consider that some recommendations should be complied with in the neonatal ICU so that the application of music therapy is satisfactorily presented. The rhythm of the songs should be simple, frequency regular, the sound should be as low as possible, not exceeding 45 decibels. The stereo should not be too close to the incubator and during the session it is essential that there is silence in the environment. In this way, the music will be presented at a mild volume, giving relaxation, promoting pain relief, providing comfort to babies (Rodrigues et al., 2018).



According to Arnon (2011), in the last decade, music in neonatology has become therapeutic, providing excellent results in the development of hospitalized babies. Several benefits of music therapy have been found in behavioral and physiological variables. One of the benefits is improved sucking, feeding, and weight gain, decreased stress behavior, significantly improved sleep, elevated oxygen saturation levels for short periods, facial expressions of well-being and pleasure, and stable vital signs.

## 6.5 MUSIC THERAPY IN THE PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY UNIT

Within the hospital there are several purposes that can be achieved using music, in relation to different ailments. In certain contexts, music can give rise to new behaviors in the face of pain, other strategies related to coping with hospitalization and disease, changing hormone levels, such as endorphins (Brito, 2012).

Silva et al. (2016) state that children undergoing chemotherapy treatment may have fewer episodes of nausea and vomiting, with the use of music in bed, may have an increased immune response, less pain during bone marrow aspiration. Many psychological benefits are observed in addition to the physiological ones in the treatment of children with cancer.

As a non-pharmacological complementary therapy in cancer patients, music also provides a reduction in fatigue due to medication side effects, and a reduction in stress levels related to the disease. Music therapy can intervene positively in the treatment of children with cancer, considerably improving their quality of life.

According to Magela and Mafalda (2017), within the hospital there are several purposes that can be achieved using music. Acting in all human dimensions, music can be used in nursing care because it produces positive results therapeutically in patients.

Pimentel (2013) points out that children with cancer experience feelings such as anger, fear, sadness, feelings of inadequacy on a daily basis, as well as pain and all the physical discomfort of the disease. That is why all possible emotional assistance is necessary.

According to Leão (2004), in certain contexts, music can give rise to new behaviors in the face of pain, other strategies related to coping with hospitalization and disease, changing hormone levels, such as endorphins. Feelings of pleasure, security and fun are heightened.

According to Castro (2012), music therapy can help for good progress in the hospital environment, intervening positively in the treatment of children with cancer, considerably improving their quality of life, their physical, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual evolution.



## 7 FINAL THOUGHTS

Through the present study, it was possible to reach the conclusion that music therapy, as a humanization tool, provides great benefits to hospitalized children who often go through moments of great suffering.

Children under the intervention of music have the possibility to reflect on existential meanings that help them to strengthen themselves, achieving internal changes that coping with the disease provides.

The use of music by the nursing team is still a challenge, requiring more effective dissemination, because although some advances in the area have occurred, music therapy is still contested by health professionals who are unaware of its therapeutic actions and methods.

In view of the benefits of music both within pediatric oncology, in the neonatal hospitalization unit, in the pediatric hospitalization unit, in all clinical contexts where its intervention takes place, it is necessary to reflect on this humanized practice that is music therapy, a still recent field that needs in-depth studies and new perspectives for its area of expertise.

It is important to foster discussions about more humanized forms of interventions in pediatric nursing, with emphasis on the tools of music therapy, which also forms the link of the therapeutic relationship between children and team members.

The hospital is undoubtedly a place of human development, in terms of the context of people who take care of people, with the aim of promoting health. Considering that when the individual is observed in addition to their health-disease process, their physical and mental integrity is considered in the care provided, intra-hospital humanization occurs naturally and its result is very positive.



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