



**EFFECTS OF CANCER PATIENTS LISTENING TO THEIR PREFERRED MUSIC
ON CLAUSTROPHOBIA, ANXIETY, AND NAUSEA DURING RADIATION
TREATMENT**

Pomi Yun¹
Roy Kennedy¹

¹University of Georgia, USA

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of cancer patients listening to their preferred music on claustrophobia, anxiety, and nausea during radiation treatment. Patients with head and/or neck cancer may experience claustrophobia as a result of having to wear a mask during their radiation treatments and; in general, many patients with cancer below the head have anxiety and nausea as a result of anticipating and receiving radiation treatments as well.

Method: This quasi-experimental pilot study includes a single group of volunteer participants who have been exposed to music during their treatments. The participants were asked to indicate their preferred artists and songs, which were played via Pandora on an iPod during their radiation treatments. Initially, customized playlists were created for the patients; however, the patients quickly became exhausted of the music and asked for more variety. Through artist-preferred playlist provided by Pandora, the patients were more satisfied. Data was collected via paper and pencil questionnaires for the dependent variables anxiety, claustrophobia, and nausea. The researchers and nurses sat with patients prior to and after their first radiation treatment and final radiation treatment to assist the patients with any questions about the questionnaires. Only patients that could not cognitively understand the questions after the researchers read the questions aloud and gave repeated prompts were excluded from participating in the study. Since the treatment room was very small, the patients' preferred music was played on an iPod through connected speakers. The radiation therapist controlled the music source during each patient's treatments. The researchers calculated scores from the questionnaires and compared the scores from the time prior to the first treatment to the time after the last treatment.

Results: Seven out of thirteen patients (53.8%) showed a decrease in suffocation related to claustrophobia. Ten out of thirteen patients (76.9%) showed a decrease in restriction related to claustrophobia. Eight out of thirteen patients (61.5%) showed a decrease in levels of anxiety. Nausea showed no changes or was never present throughout the treatment period. The researchers recorded qualitative comments that the patients made before and after treatments, which provided additional information concerning their experiencing of the dependent variables.

Conclusion: The results of this study may be of use to music therapy professionals that work with cancer patients undergoing radiation therapy. The majority of music therapy studies with cancer patients focuses on those undergoing chemotherapy treatment. In addition, no music therapy studies were found that specifically investigate the effects of patient preferred listening on the claustrophobia of cancer patients.

Keywords: *music therapy, patient preferred listening, cancer, radiation treatment.* [The author can be reached at pomiyun@uga.edu or rkennedy@uga.edu]