EFFECTS OF MUSIC THERAPY ON ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN PATIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE: A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

S. Guetin, F. Portet, J. Touchon

Neurology, CHU Montpellier, Montpellier, France

Introduction: Numerous studies have indicated the value of music therapy in the management of patients with Alzheimer’s disease. A recent pilot study demonstrated the feasibility and usefulness of a new music therapy technique. The aim of this controlled, randomised study was to assess the effects of this new music therapy technique on anxiety and depression in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer-type dementia.

The number of subject required in this study was estimated at 15 subjects per group. This sample size was based on the results of a preliminary study. The treated group (n=15) participated in weekly sessions of individual, receptive music therapy. The musical style was chosen by the patient. The validated “U” technique was employed. The control group (n=15), participated under the same conditions in reading sessions. The principal end-point, measured at W1, W4, W8, W16 and W24, was the level of anxiety (Hamilton scale). Changes to the depression score (GDS) were also analyzed as a secondary end-point.

Results: Significant improvements in anxiety and depression were observed in the music therapy group as from W4 and until W16. The effect of music therapy was sustained for up to 8 weeks after the discontinuation of sessions between W16 and W24.

Conclusion: These results confirm the valuable effect of music therapy on anxiety and depression in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s disease. This new music therapy technique is simple to implement and can easily be integrated in a multidisciplinary programme for the management of Alzheimer’s disease.