

# EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MUSIC THERAPY IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PALLIATIVE CARE PATIENTS: A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED PILOT AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

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**Introduction** Music therapy is frequently used as a palliative therapy (Demmer, 2004), with the primary aim of improving people's quality of life. To date, primarily because of a paucity of robust research, the evidence for music therapy's effectiveness on patient reported outcomes is positive but weak (McConnell *et al.*, 2016).

**Aim(s)** This pilot and feasibility study will: test procedures; outcomes and validated tools; estimate recruitment and attrition rates; and calculate the sample size required for a phase III randomised trial to evaluate the effectiveness of music therapy in improving the quality of life of palliative care patients.

**Method(s)** A pilot controlled trial supplemented with qualitative methods with n = 52 patients from an inpatient and day hospice setting. Baseline data collection includes the McGill Quality of Life Questionnaire (MQOL), medical and socio-demographic data. Participants in the intervention arm are offered two 30–45 minute sessions of music therapy per week for 3 consecutive weeks, in addition to care as usual. Participants in the control arm receive care as usual. Follow-up measures administered at 3 and 5-weeks. Qualitative data collection involves focus group/interviews with HCPs and carers.

**Results** The results of the study will ensure a firm methodological grounding for the development of a robust phase III

randomised trial of music therapy for improving quality of life in palliative care patients.

**Conclusion(s)** By undertaking the pilot and feasibility trial under normal clinical conditions in a hospice setting, the trial will result in reliable procedures to overcome some of the difficulties in designing music therapy RCTs for palliative care settings.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Demmer C. A survey of complementary therapy services provided by hospices. *J Palliat Med* 2004;**7**(4):510–516
- 2 McConnell T, Scott D, Porter S. Music therapy for end-of-life care: an updated systematic review. *Palliat Med* 2016. doi:10.1177/0269216316635387. Accessed March 4, 2016