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Music therapy relieves fibromyalgia symptoms and improves patients' quality of life

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University of Granada researchers have proven that music therapy combined with other relaxation techniques based on guided imagery reduces significantly pain, depression and anxiety, and improves sleep among patients suffering from fibromyalgia. Thus, this therapy enhances patients' quality of life. This pioneer experimental study in Europe has shown that these two techniques enhance the well-being and personal power of patients with fibromyalgia, who are allowed to take part in their treatment.

This research study was conducted with patients suffering from fibromyalgia from the provinces of Granada, Almería and Córdoba, Spain. They undertook a basal test at the beginning of the treatment, a post-basal test four weeks after the intervention, and another post-basal test eight weeks after the intervention, at the end of the study.

Treatment at home

The researchers applied a relaxation technique based on guided imagery and music therapy to patients, in a series of sessions conducted by a researcher. Patients were given a CD to listen at home. Then, researchers measured a number of variables associated to the main symptoms of fibromyalgia –as pain intensity, quality of life, impact of the condition on patient's daily life, sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, self-efficiency, well-being. Then, patients were given the chance to participate in their own treatment through an understanding of their condition.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that affects and conditions patients' social, personal and working life and requires a multidisciplinary approach developed by a team of physicians, physiotherapists, experts in physical activity and sport, psychologists and nurses. According to University of Granada researchers, their study confirms that nursery has the tools –as the art of relaxation with guided imagery and receptive music therapy– that have proven effective in the alternative symptomatic treatment of this condition. The low cost, easy implementation, numerous advantages, and the fact that patients can get involved in their treatment at home are some of the many advantages of this technique.

Anyway, researchers state that "further empirical research studies are needed to address other physiological variables associated with the well-being generated by these two techniques, and that analyse patients' self-efficiency and personal power to get involved in their own treatment.

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This piece of research was conducted by **María Dolores Onieva Zafra**, at the Department of Nursery of the University of Granada, and coordinated by professors **Adelaida Castro Sánchez**, **Carmen Moreno y Guillermo Matarán**. The results obtained in this study were published in the journal *Pain Management Nursing*.

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