

*Use of*

# Music in Hospital

Evidence Based Information Sheets for Consumers

## What is evidence based health information?

Just as a detective searches for evidence to solve a crime, so too do health professionals look for evidence to guide their practice. The detective must have evidence to support their case. In a similar fashion, the health care professional must have evidence to support their proposed course of treatment. They search for information that will help them to provide the most effective or beneficial form of care to their patients. Due to the wealth of information available to them, the process of discovering which information is the best can be difficult and time consuming. It would take an enormous amount of time for your doctor to sift through the large amounts of research and information available to them on a particular topic. This is where the Joanna Briggs Institute comes into play. We conduct the 'detective' work, providing them (and you) with the best available evidence.

### Evidence Reliability

The evidence related to the topic of each consumer publication produced by the Joanna Briggs Institute is assessed for reliability and quality. We do not rate a procedure or treatment, but the evidence (or research) that is available to support it.

Evidence can play a critical role in any investigation and it is important for detectives to recognise evidence that will provide 'reliable' information to aid in the investigation. This is also the case when assessing health information, as some types of evidence are more reliable than others.

For Joanna Briggs Institute evidence based information for consumers, you can be assured that the best available evidence is utilised. If you would like more information about research and levels of evidence, please contact the Joanna Briggs Institute or visit the research page of our consumer web site.

"The procedures described in this pamphlet must only be used by people who have appropriate expertise in the field to which the procedure relates. The applicability of any information must be established before relying on it. While care has been taken to ensure that this pamphlet summarises available research and expert consensus, any loss, damage, cost, expense or liability suffered or incurred as a result of reliance on these procedures (whether arising in contract, negligence or otherwise) is, to the extent permitted by law, excluded".

## What does this mean for consumers?

As consumers of health care it is important to know that your treatment is being based on the best available evidence. It is also important that you are provided with all of the information in order to have greater independence in relation to your own health care decisions and to be involved in the decision making process.

### Further information

The Joanna Briggs Institute Consumer Information Program provides up to date literature reviews to ensure your information is based on the best available evidence. The Institute also produces systematic reviews and Best Practice Information sheets aimed at clinicians and health professionals. This means you are provided with the same high standard of publications based on the same information as those working directly in the field.

### Contact details

The Joanna Briggs Institute has collaborating centres throughout Australia and overseas. If you would like more information on the Institute, its publications or wish to contact a Joanna Briggs Institute collaborating centre near you, please visit our web site:

[www.joannabriggs.edu.au](http://www.joannabriggs.edu.au)



THE JOANNA BRIGGS INSTITUTE

Level 4, Margaret Graham Building  
Royal Adelaide Hospital  
North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia 5000

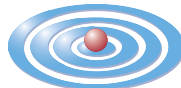
email: [jbi@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:jbi@adelaide.edu.au)

ph: +61 8 8303 4880 fax: +61 8 8303 4881



The best available evidence...

Relaxation  
Anxiety Reduction



## About *Music in Hospital*

Being in hospital can be an anxious and stressful experience and everyone will deal with this time in a different way. There are many techniques available to help people relax while they are in hospital including education programs, videos, relaxing massages and aromatherapy. This sheet focuses on the benefits of listening to music in hospital, but remember if music doesn't work for you try something else as there are many options available to you!

Music as a form of treatment is largely a development of the 20th Century. However, it has existed in various forms in most cultures for centuries. In recent years the use of music in hospitals has increased. Music has been used for patients of all ages, from infants and children to adults and the elderly. It has also been used in many health care specialties such as intensive care, coronary care, cancer care, maternity units, geriatric units, palliative care and outpatient departments. Music is used along with other activities such as education programs, videos and relaxing massages.

The information on this sheet relates music played via tape recorder, or compact disc player, for a patient during their care. Styles of music reviewed included classical, instrumental, relaxing, piano and new age. The review was not able to determine if one type of music was more effective than other types of music.

### References

This Consumer Information Sheet has been based on a systematic review and *Best Practice* Information Sheet undertaken by the Joanna Briggs Institute under the guidance of a review panel of clinical experts.  
Evans, D. 2001 Music as an Intervention for Hospital Patients. A Systematic Review No. 15 The Joanna Briggs Institute for Evidence Based Nursing and Midwifery

## Uses of music

Music has been used to relieve a wide range of symptoms not only in the hospital, but in the community and residential care settings. These include:

anxiety	severity of pain	pain
satisfaction	tolerance	mood
sedation use	analgesic use	

## Effectiveness of Music

### *Hospital Patients*

Hospital patients are generally resting in a bed or chair. Often they are preparing for, or recovering from, a procedure, surgery or other illness. Based on the findings of the review, the use of music in Hospital may result in:

- reduced anxiety
- a small reduction in the respiratory rate
- improved mood

Music does not have any impact on patients heart rate or blood pressure

### *Procedure Patients*

Procedure patients are those who are undergoing a procedure or surgery. Based on the findings of the review, playing music during unpleasant or invasive procedures does **not** have any impact on:

- patient anxiety
- heart rate or blood pressure
- the rating of severity of pain

However, there are suggestions that it may reduce the need for sedation or analgesia.

## The evidence suggests...

Based on good evidence, the following recommendation can be made:



**If you (or a friend or relative) are in hospital, playing recorded music while resting in a bed or chair may reduce anxiety and improve mood.**

### *Hospital Patients*

There is a lot of evidence to support the use of music for adults during their hospital stay to reduce anxiety. However, it has little impact on physical conditions such as blood pressure and heart rate. This evidence suggests that music may be useful in the care of patients during their hospital stay as an effective treatment to reduce anxiety.

### *Procedure Patients*

The role of music during unpleasant procedures is less clear, and while it has been suggested that it may reduce the patient's requirements for sedation and analgesia, further research is necessary.