

# THE POWER OF MUSIC

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## Relaxation Interventions for Antepartum and Postpartum Women during Hospitalization to Reduce Stress and Anxiety and Promote Mother/Infant Attachment

### Introduction

Anxiety, depression, and stress in pregnancy have been linked to adverse outcomes for mothers and children. Approximately 1 million women in the United States are prescribed bedrest for high-risk pregnancy each year (Yeager, 2019). Bedrest can escalate feelings of depression, isolation, and stress. Music therapy has become increasingly popular as it is a safe, convenient, non-invasive, and in-expensive treatment option that may give inpatient antepartum and postpartum women choices and control in their care to help reduce her stress and anxiety with hospitalization, and promote maternal/child attachment. (Shmuel, 2019).

### Research Question

In acute inpatient antepartum and postpartum women, what is the effect of music therapy on psychological stress, anxiety, and mother-baby bonding compared with no music therapy?

### Purpose

To see if bedside music therapy would be a viable option to alleviate stress and anxiety, provide emotional support, and facilitate mother-baby bonding for women during antepartum and postpartum inpatient hospitalization.

### Conceptual Framework

Ramona Mercer developed the Maternal Role Attainment Theory. Mercer's theory refers to nurses as "the health professionals having the most sustained and intense interaction with women in the maternity cycle". Mothers of all ages, socio-economic status, and race can be helped with Mercer's theory as these women come into contact with healthcare professionals from preconception to postpartum. It is a patient-oriented theory that adapts to each mother's individual needs as she moves through the four stages of maternal role attainment. The nurse works with the mother's support system and builds on the mother's strengths in order to help her develop a sense confidence in her abilities to care for herself and her infant. (Noseff, 2014).

### Methods

Pregnant women's psychological needs are often not taken as seriously as their physical needs despite evidence showing adverse outcomes for the mother and child. The aim of this systematic review was to assess the effectiveness of music-based interventions in reducing levels of stress and anxiety among hospitalized antepartum women and new mothers.

**Databases searched:** PubMed, Embase, Elsevier, Gale Cengage Academic, CINAHL, Research Gate, Forsyth Library, EBSC, with five articles dating from 2018-2019 used.

### Research Study Types:

Five studies were selected which included a variety of study methods including a mixed qualitative pilot study, pilot study with singing intervention, randomized control trial with live music, qualitative constructivist approach, and a mixed quantitative, qualitative with retrospective analysis of post intervention feedback questionnaires. There was a variety of music methods with some using live music, some CD, one with attachment to record heart rate in a variety of inpatient settings with antepartum, or mother/baby units, or NICU with intention to record the stress as stated by the mothers and interventions to study the effects of the particular music intervention at relieving stress/anxiety and promotion of the mother/infant attachment.

### Inclusion

Inpatient hospitalized antepartum or postpartum mother/infant dyad.

Able to consent.

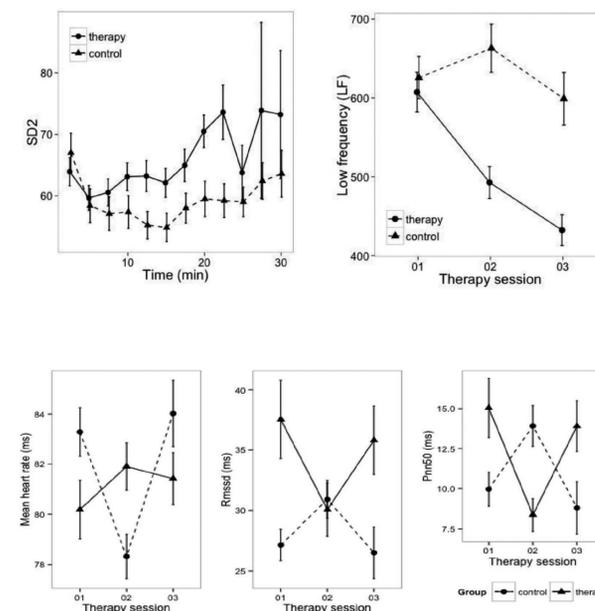


### Results

All five studies showed positive results with either a reduction in mother's self-reported stress levels as reported by their own words or shown with heart rate variability or the calmness of their babies, whether the music was live or CD or mother's singing to their infants.

While there was a fair amount of studies with music therapy for non-hospitalized pregnant women and a few for NICU infants, the results did not show a lot of data on the use of music therapy as an intervention in hospitalized antepartum women and mother/baby units.

In the few studies that there are, they have shown promise in reducing stress. The results have shown to be an effective, non-pharmaceutical, well-received, and in-expensive therapy choice for hospitalized pregnant women and mothers, and further studies are needed to show the efficacy of Music Therapy on a pregnant women's psychological health, especially those who are hospitalized with complications and as they adjust to becoming mothers.



### Implications for Nursing

Music therapy has long been used in other areas but is relatively new in obstetrics. We know that 1 million pregnant women each year are admitted for a hospitalized complication of their pregnancy and we know that the psychological stress of these mothers have not garnered the attention they deserved and thirdly we know that maternal stress has adverse outcomes for mothers and mother/infant attachment. Music therapy has long been known to be effective in many other disciplines with helping to calm, relieve stress and present coping methods. Music therapy in the few studies that there have been done with obstetrics has shown a wide acceptance across different ages, races, socio-economic and educational statuses with promising results in reducing stress and anxiety and enhancement of maternal well-being for the antepartum mother as well as the postpartum mother/infant attachment. Music therapy is a safe, non-pharmaceutical, non-invasive, in-expensive, convenient way to potentially help hospitalized pregnant women and the mother/baby dyad, and looking forward, it should be considered as a holistic intervention option in maternity units.

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