

# Music listening enhances recovery and mood after stroke

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This research was conducted by **Teppo Särkämö and 11 others** from **universities in Finland and Canada**

## Summary

A group of patients who had suffered arterial stroke had improved cognitive abilities and better mood after listening to music compared to patients who listened to audio books or did not listen to any audio material. These patients had better recovery of verbal, short-term and working memory, were more able to pay attention and felt less depressed as a result of regular music listening.

## Two different types of audio stimuli were used in this study

60 stroke patients from the Department of Neurology, Helsinki University Central Hospital were recruited over the course of two years to take part in this study. Music therapists provided patients with either music or audio books of their choice, which they listened to for a minimum of an hour daily for the course of two months. A third group of patients did not listen to either music or audio books. The patients were tested by researchers using a variety of tasks and questionnaires to identify improvement in the recovery of their intellectual abilities and mental wellness one week, three months and six months after stroke.

## Music is more restorative than audio books

For most of the tests that were carried out, patients who listened to music performed better than patients who listened to audio books or nothing at all and they experienced less depression and confusion six months after the stroke. As most of the music had lyrics, the authors believe that it is the

musical component that has the main role in the improvement of the cognitive functions. Therefore, this study concludes that due to its efficacy and inexpensiveness, music listening would be a valuable addition to the healthcare of stroke patients.

This summary is by **Elena Popa, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

## Keywords

**stroke** **Finland** **experiment** **therapy** **music**

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