CultureCase

Music can be part of a holistic approach to pain management

This research was conducted by **Julie A. Leis** and **Colleen I. Morrison** at **James Bell Associates, USA**

Summary

This paper reviewed all the relevant published studies on the use of arts to reduce pain. The research found that music interventions may reduce people's pain, reduce the amount of pain medication they take, improve their readiness and motivation for substance use treatment, and reduce their cravings. Most of the studies looked at the use of music rather than other art forms.

Opioids have been part of the treatment package for acute pain in the United States

In the 1990s a controversial increase in prescribing opioids for chronic pain led to an increase in opioid dependence and overdose. The arts are increasingly used within the healthcare system, especially as physical, mental and behavioural health approaches are integrated by physicians and the healthcare system. More and more research is being undertaken which examines the role of the arts in pain reduction and other therapeutic benefits, partly in search for alternatives to opioids.

More research is needed to understand the pathways between the arts and pain management and substance use disorders

The paper was a literature review, which means that its data was subject to publication bias (the study only looked at research which was published and discoverable in various bibliographic databases). Nonetheless, it provides evidence that 'music has a role within integrated and holistic approaches to

pain management’. This is especially promising since ‘music is enjoyable for most individuals and music-based pain management strategies are easy to learn and inexpensive to implement at home’.

Keywords

literature review **USA** **health** **pain**

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