

# MUSIC THERAPY WITH PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PILOT STUDY

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## Background

Patients suffering from a chronic progressive illness like multiple sclerosis experience increasing restrictions in their lifestyle and are forced to cope with the loss of independence, ability to work and a reduced social and financial status.

There is often evidence of low self-esteem, a fear of losing control, social withdrawal and general loss of interest in life.

MS patients also show impairments in their mental and emotional condition, this is a serious burden, and they particularly complain of a restriction in self-expression.

The premorbid competence of MS patients appears to be of much more significance for coping with the disease and its consequences than assumed so far.

## Aims

Thus a therapy approach where personality-specific, i.e. individual factors and competences may be taken into consideration and be supported, and where patients are encouraged to remain active or resume activities is indicated.

## Method

A controlled pilot study over a period of one year with 20 male and female MS patients explored the specific benefits derived from active non-verbal music therapy using the Nordoff/Robbins approach. A focus was made on personal activity and the discovery of individual resources and limitations.

Another objective of the study is to illustrate a method of how to assess qualitative data collected in music therapy and how to correlate them with quantitative data from standardized interviews on quality of life, self-acceptance, depression and anxiety.

## Results

Results will be presented at the conference.