



The Views of Parents and Legal Guardians of Individuals with Special Needs and Non-Music Therapists on Music Therapy in Jordan



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Background & Rationale

Music therapy is a very adaptable tool that can be useful for individuals with special needs. Parents' perspectives on music therapy are very important, as examined and discussed by Procter (2005). Annesley et al. (2020), note the importance of parental perspectives to the outcomes of their children's music therapy. A twelve article review by Schmid et al. (2018), emphasizes the importance of integrating patients' perspectives as well as healthcare providers' perspectives into music therapy research and programs. The perspectives of non-music therapists are also important to consider since music therapy can be part of a multidisciplinary program. The perspectives of such therapists will affect their interactions with music therapists and the integration of music therapy. Hicks (2020), highlights how culture can influence perspectives on music therapy. The paper addresses how music therapy depends on the patient's dialect, language or religious background. Jordan is an Arab country with a predominantly Muslim population (Jordan - The World Factbook, 2022). To promote music therapy to a wider array of people, it is important to understand their perspectives on music therapy, its effects and therapeutic outcomes. The question this paper sets out to answer is:

What are the perspectives and perceptions of people who care for special needs individuals and non-music therapists towards music therapy in Jordan?



Method

This is a mixed method study. There are two groups in this study. All participants must have lived or worked in Jordan for at least one year in the past five years. The first group PG consists of parents or legal guardians of special needs individuals and must be the primary or secondary caregivers. The second group TG consists of any non medical professional who works with special needs individuals, excluding music therapists. Quantitative data was measured using group specific questionnaires. The qualitative data was measured using semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data was processed using SPSS® version 28.0.1.1 and qualitative data was processed manually.

Results

Of the PG, the majority of respondents were mothers, 85.7%, and most were 36 - 45 years old, 44.9%, or 46+ years old, 36.7%. Most of them were educated, 74.6. Of the TG sample, the majority were speech language therapists, 56.3%, have 7-10 or 10+ years of experience, 31.3% and 43.8% respectively, and have a master's degree in their field, 62.5% The qualitative data from PG and TG groups highlight society's views on trying music therapy. PG and TG participants mention that there is willingness to try music therapy to gain skills and abilities (PG), but it is impeded by cost, awareness and prioritization of treatments (TG). Participants also think the best way to promote music therapy in Jordan is by raising awareness. More firsthand exposure and professional collaborations are also needed. The data showed that cost, availability, awareness and culture might all be barriers to music therapy in Jordan. Additionally, PG participants include availability of music therapists, music therapy not being a priority, and some cultural barriers. Most participants did however consider music therapy as religiously acceptable, with none considering it religiously objectionable. Most participants think that Jordanian society's views are gradually improving, but there remains religious fundamentalism. They also think that the views of people living in the capital and largest city are different from outside of the city.

Figure 1: Comparison of definitions of music therapy of PG participants (left) to that of TG participants (right). The evaluation of the definition accuracy is the independent variable of the definition provided by PG/TG. PG/TG participants comparing the use of music to address therapeutic goals. PG/TG participants comparing the use of music to address therapeutic goals. PG/TG participants comparing the use of music to address therapeutic goals.

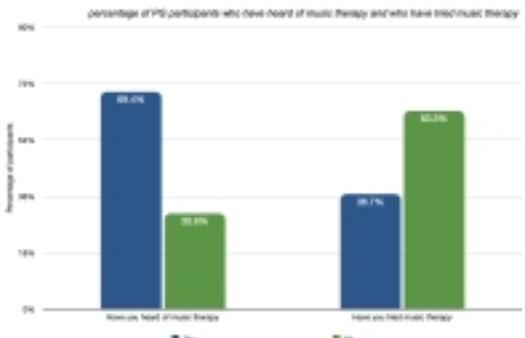
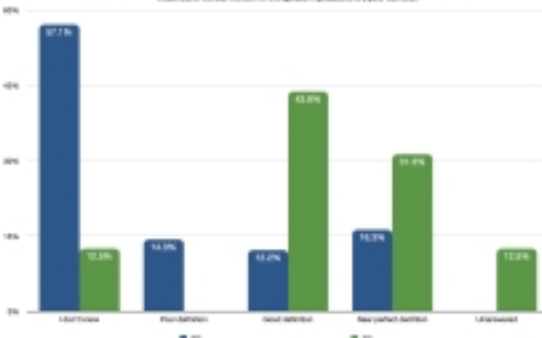


Table 1: Some of the views of the non-music therapists group (TG) on music therapy

Test Item	Breakdown	N	Percentage
Have your patients tried music therapy?	Yes	7	43.8%
	No	9	56.2%
Did music therapy help your patients improve?	None have tried music therapy	9	56.2%
	No change	3	18.8%
	Some improvement	4	25.0%
	Significant improvement	0	0.0%
Have you considered recommending music therapy?	Already have	6	37.5%
	Yes	7	43.8%
	Maybe	2	12.5%
	No	1	6.2%
How developed do you think is music therapy in Jordan compared to you field?	Not developed at all	4	25.0%
	Not developed	1	6.2%
	Just as developed	0	0.0%
	More developed	1	6.2%
	Much more developed	0	0.0%

Table 2: Some of the views of the parents of legal guardians group (PG) on music therapy

Test Item	Breakdown	N	Percentage
For those who have tried music therapy, was there any improvement?	Not much improvement	1	5.6%
	No change	1	5.6%
	Some improvement	9	50.0%
	Significant improvement	7	38.8%
Have you considered trying music therapy?	Already have	18	36.7%
	Yes	8	16.3%
	No	2	4.1%
	Maybe	18	36.7%
It is religiously acceptable to receive music therapy	Unanswered	2	6.1%
	Yes in all cases	28	57.2%
	Yes in some cases	10	20.4%
	Neutral	6	12.2%
	No in all cases	0	0.0%
	I don't know	5	10.2%

	Cost		Availability		Access	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not a barrier at all	5	10.2%	5	10.2%	5	10.2%
Not a barrier	5	10.2%	13	26.5%	13	26.5%
Neutral	15	30.6%	14	28.0%	11	22.0%
Somewhat a barrier	15	30.6%	8	16.3%	14	28.0%
A significant barrier	9	18.4%	9	18.4%	9	18.2%

Discussion

Most people know about the existence of music therapy in Jordan, however, the majority of PG did not offer an accurate definition of music therapy. Most of the TG had a more accurate definition. This is mirrored in the qualitative section of the study; most of the PG and TG participants said awareness as is needed to promote and advance music therapy in Jordan. Music therapy has low permeability through the Jordanian society, with only 36.7% of PG having tried music therapy before, none of the TG have previously worked with a music therapist. PG and TG participants mention the need for awareness campaigns and firsthand experiences to promote music therapy. A successful campaign that shows how important it is to raise awareness about music therapy is a campaign called RMTs change life (registered music therapists change life) ("RMTs Change Lives Campaign", 2016). Lastly, while PG participants said that they would like professional referrals to a music therapist, professional referrals appear to be a less common method of patient recruitment for therapists in general. Only 6.3% of therapists listed medical referrals as a primary source of patient recruitment, and 31.3% listed it as a secondary source of patient recruitment. This discrepancy needs to be addressed professionally and with the help of all therapists in conjunction with the medical community.

Further research

- A larger and more diverse sample needs to be studied.
- A study on the perspectives of the general Jordanian population and other communities in Jordan.
- A study into why the medical community does not refer patients to therapy in general.

References

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