

17th World Congress on

Clinical Nursing & Practice

August 29-30, 2018 | Zurich, Switzerland

A quasi-experimental study on the stress of chemical dependents under the effect of music therapy

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Introduction & Aim: Today, drug use is at alarming proportions around the world, associated with violence and organized crime, reaching citizens of all walks of life at ever smaller ages. The banalization of consumption and excessive advertising of licit drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, opens the door for abusive use and chemical dependence to develop. Aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of music therapy on the stress of chemical dependents.

Methods: A quasi-experimental study carried out in a philanthropic institution, located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in January 2017, together with 18 chemical dependents in rehabilitation. Salivary cortisol (stress hormone) was collected before, 60 and 120 minutes after the sole intervention of music therapy. Statistical analysis adopted a significance level of $p < 0.05$ using Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric tests.

Results: After 60 minutes of intervention, there was a statistically significant reduction in mean salivary cortisol levels ($p < 0.001$). After 120 minutes, there was also a reduction, but no statistical significance ($p = 0.139$).

Conclusion: Single session of 60 minutes of music therapy proved to be effective in reducing the stress of chemical dependents.