

What is Medical Music Therapy in Islamic Civilization?

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Abstract

This article discusses the medical model of music therapy in the Islamic civilization. It was not introduced, however, during the era of Islamic civilization, but had already been used since the Greek civilization era. The purpose of this article is to detail the extent of the application of this medical concept of music therapy in the Islamic civilization. This qualitative research is designed using content analysis and historical study methods. Data is gathered through textual method and data analysis is by descriptive approach. Research results show that music therapy not only functioned as treatment but also as a medium of communication between the listener and the Creator. However, it is undeniable that music in the Islamic civilization was a re-shaping of the Greek contribution in developing it as a form of therapy.

Keywords: music, music therapy, concept of music therapy

What is Music?

The word music originates from the Greek language (Kipayd.u; al-Athari 2003). According to Kipay (d.u.), it comes from the word 'muisike' or 'mousa'. The Greeks believed that the word means 'muse', that is, goddess. Based on Greek mythology, the nine *muses* or *mousai* were considered the daughters of Zeus (the greatest Greek God) and were goddesses of music, song and dance, and source of inspiration for poetry. Therefore, the ancient Greeks believed that these goddesses of the arts were responsible for keeping harmony and beauty in the world. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, music is a branch of the arts and also a science of combining vocal sounds received by the individual. Music varies depending on a person's history, location, culture and taste. In al-Athari's view (2013), the word music comes from the word *musica* which includes the different musical arts and instruments such as flute, violin, drum, dulcimer, harp, mandolin and cymbal. In Arabic language, music is termed *assama'* or *musiqa*. According to *Mu'jam al-Wasit* (1973), *sama'* refers to a beautiful voice and music is also defined a *sal-ghina'* (singing). In terms of terminology, music is an arrangement and replacement of various sounds combined at a graduated rate based on a composition of different musical scales to suit the listener. Another definition of music is "an art form consisting of sequences of sounds in time, especially tones of definite pitch, organized melodically, harmonically, rhythmically and according to tone colour (dictionary.com)."

According to Kamus Dwibahasa (1995), music means sounds. The word musical connotes sound instruments or instruments which produce sound. According to Kamus Dewan (2007), music means a sound composition which produces beautiful and pleasant forms and rhythms, or sounds produced by instruments. Cambridge Dictionary in the website <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/music> defines music as pattern of sounds made by musical instruments, voices, or computers, or a combination of these, intended to give pleasure to people listening to it. According to Rogers (1918: 251), music is scientifically something produced from air vibrations which produce sounds and reactions in humans as well as influence a person's emotion and psychology. Therefore, as music produces sounds not only through the use of musical instruments, the researcher deduces that music not only includes sounds produced by musical instruments, but human voices and natural sounds as well. Thus, what is meant by music in the context of this article also covers natural sounds such as singing of birds, waterfalls and all forms of sounds which produce rhythm such as in reciting of al-Quran, chanting of *adhan* (call for prayer), and *zikr* (remembrance of Allah) which bring serenity to the listener.

What is Music Therapy?

According to the Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka portal, therapy is treatment of mental or physical disease through a healing process without the use of medicine or surgery (DBP 2013). Oztunc (2015:2) stated that music therapy is a psychological method of treatment and the psychological effect of listening to musical sounds. Music therapy is also a branch of emotional and physical healthcare, a natural combination which plays an effective role in psychological, emotional and moral disorders and a method for healing, comfort and tranquility (Korhan 2014: 307). Music is a very good therapy particularly for mental patients. In addition, music is an alternative treatment to using drugs which may cause side-effects. Music therapy is an instrument for professional use whether in medicine, education as well as the living environment. Human life needs balance and the basis of study and training in music therapy itself is to stabilize the whole of physical, social, communicative, intellectual and health conditions (Talin Babikian 2013: 251).

From the above definitions, it is clear that music therapy plays a role in influencing a person's emotions and psychology. It can be deduced that music therapy is a treatment which involves use of music to produce calming and soothing sounds in treating and restoring balance to a patient's emotions. Music has been made a method and instrument of healing. Besides reducing cost of treatment, it is effective in soothing and reducing a patient's pain. Scientists such as Kisilevsky studied the ability of a foetus to pay attention when music is played and the effect of music on foetus heartbeat and movement (SitiPatonah 2013: 62). In fact, during the glory of the Islamic civilization, Muslim scholars such as al-Farabi, al-Kindi, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi and Safi al-Din Abd al-Mu'min had already acknowledged music therapy as a method of healing (Siti Patonah 2013: 63).

Music therapy before the Islamic Civilization

Before the Islamic Civilization, music had already been used as therapy in the Greek civilization. Greek scholars such as Plato, Pythagoras, Galen, Gallius and Asclepius had their own views in matters relating to music therapy. According to Wang (2004), Plato used the concept of *Harmonia* (harmony) in explaining the power of music which ultimately influences a person. He also used the same concept in *Timaeus* (book of dialogue by four scholarly characters speculating on the nature of the physical world and human beings) relating to philosophy used by Pythagoras, that is, numerical relationships between musical intervals and cosmic spheres. Plato discovered the ratios in music intervals such as 2:3, 3:2, 4:3, 9:8 and 256:243 which were identified as equivalent to life creation by God. In other words, the ratios found in music intervals form the basis of music and the creation of the universe as well as the creation of the human soul. On this basis, Plato viewed that music is an instrument which plays an important role in forming a person's virtues and morals. (Portnoy1949). This is because music is an art capable of a greater influence than architecture, carved statues and paintings as it has a harmonious rhythm which affects humans. However, the influence and effect on humans depend on the power of the type of music used (Wang 2004). If the rhythm used is unpleasant or disharmonious, it will lead to negative directions and vice versa. If the correct music is used, it can bring harmony in the psyche or soul. Bad music will cause disobedience and contempt for religion.

Throughout the practice of music therapy, the Greek civilization had proven that music application served as a treatment based on their theory and philosophy. According to Babikian (2013), the 'Father of Music' in the Greek civilization was Pythagoras. This title was given because he used music as a medium to treat psychological and physical body disorders. Galen also did the same. Vesceius (1918) revealed that, Galen, described as 'The Father of Medical Science,' had suggested the use of the flute on sick or physically injured. Besides Galen, another Greek scholar who used musical instruments to heal was Gallius. He used the flute to treat epilepsy. Asclepius was described as the first Greek scholar who applied music for the purpose of arousing passion/enthusiasm (Kleisiaris 2014). In addition, Aristotle depicted music as a power in soul purification (Babikian 2013). According to Kleisiaris (2014), Aristotle claimed that religious melodies bring tranquility to the soul and are likened to medicinal and mental treatments.

Music as a Therapy in the Islamic Civilization

The use of music as medical therapy in the Islamic civilization was much influenced by the Greek civilization (Saoud, 2004). Some of the Islamic civilization scholars who used music therapy in medicine were al-Kindi, Ikhwanal-Safa', al-Razi, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina.

Al-Kindi his real name, Abu Yaqub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (801-870M) was identified as the earliest scholar of the Islamic civilization to use music therapy. According to Shiloah (1995), al-Kindi adhered to Aristotle's philosophy, that is, music has a relationship with humans and cosmology through the earth elements of water, air, fire and soil. Ikhwan al-Safa' (Brethren of Purity) held the view that there is a relationship between music and astrology. Fadlou (1995) stated that the Ikhwan first approached sound as physicists, discussed its nature, in terms of cause and effect, and its subdivision. He also briefly explained their process of perceiving sound. When they came to musical sounds and the combinations that make up musical composition, they would observe the biological and psychological effects of the music on the listener. The next step was the final goal of their observation on musical experience which was spiritual and mystical. In their philosophy, the attainment of this highest goal is made possible by their assumption that an affinity existed between music and other dimensions (the make-up of the higher spheres of being).

From the viewpoint of Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi (854-932M) or better known as al-Razi, Isgandarova (2015) asserted that music is suitable to be used for treating only mental disorders. Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad Farabi, or better known as al-Farabi (872-950M), and Ibn Sina (980-1037M) rejected all views which relate music with earth elements or zodiac. Their view was that music has an effect on human health. Further, according to Ibn Sina, music may give an impact on human health due to sounds inherited in human nature which have some functions in producing different emotions.

The views of the Muslim scholar, al-Kindi, led to the application of music as a method of treatment. Shiloah (1995) regarded al-Kindi as the first Muslim scholar who realized that music has a therapy value when he attempted to cure a paralysed child with music.

Method of Applying Music in Medicine

According to Shiloah (1995), the use of musical instruments in medicine was already used since the time of the ancient Greeks, whereby Pythagoras had used a type of musical instrument called *Lyre* and *Aoulos* in treating his patients. Kipay (d.u.) gave an example of using music therapy among Turkish people in three parts. First, its use in Central Asian culture, Islamic Culture and culture of Modern Turkey (today). The similarity found in the three cultures is that they used musical instruments in treating patients, whether traditional or modern treatment. Among the instruments used in the three cultures were the *Ud* (Lute) and Zither (stringed instrument) as well as *Nay* (bamboo flute). *Ud* and *Nay* was well-known and frequently used in music therapy. Moreover, each is symbolic. *Nay* is symbolic of the human psyche and *Ud* represents the four elements of fire, water, air and earth. In addition, *Ud* was given the title as king of all instruments (Gorini 2007). The use of musical instruments was complemented by the establishment of hospitals which also applied music therapy. According to Gorini (2007), Erdal & Erbas (2013) and Benek et al. (2015), such hospitals were developed in the Abbasid, Zengid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, Seljuk-Anatolian and Ottoman eras.

Among the Abbasid hospitals were al-Adudi Hospital and al-Mansur Hospital. Bimaristan Nur al-Din was developed in the Zengid era. The Ayyubid era developed Bimaristan al-Qaymari. The Mamluk era established Bimaristan Arghuni Hospital. The Seljuk-Anatolian era developed Gevher Nesibe Darussifa, Divrigi Ulu Mosque and Amasya Darussifa. Lastly, the Ottoman era built Fatih Darussifa, Bursa Yildirim and Edirne Hospital. All the above-mentioned hospitals used music therapy to treat mental patients.

The landscape of the hospital building also played a role in ensuring music therapy would be utilized effectively. Hospitals of the Islamic era had a very interesting architecture whereby the building functioned to give significance, particularly to the patient. Darussifa for example, contained a pool as an element to give tranquility to the psychological patient (Erdal & Erbas 2013). The effect of the sound of flowing water connected to a duct supplying rain water gave mental patients tranquility. According to Erdal & Erbas (2013), the architects of those days placed much importance on technique and interior decoration which could create good sounds. Additionally, most hospitals had a vast garden for the purpose of pleasing mental patients as part of the therapy (Gorini 2007; Iknur 2013; Bayram 2015).

In using music as medical therapy, it may not be indiscriminately applied. Timing and music must be appropriately selected to ensure effectiveness of using music therapy. This was actually al-Farabi's idea. Erdal & Erbas (2013) and Benek et al. (2015) discussed his view on the selection of the type of melodic mode or *makam* and the time suitable to play it. The *makam* played will influence a person's emotions, for example, *Ussak* tonality

makes listeners laugh while *Zirgulemakam* will make a person fall asleep and the *rastmakam* induces joy and happiness. Al-Farabi asserted that correct timing is one of the proper ways to apply music, whereby it will be played according to the patient's readiness to listen or otherwise. For example, if *Ussakmakam* is to be used, the most appropriate time is mid-day and for *Zirgulemakam* before mid-day.

Types of Music in Islamic Civilization

There were at least three types of music in the Islamic Civilization. The first type is music according to various melodic modes or *makam*. According to Erdal & Erbas (2013), different *makam* were used by al-Farabi to treat patients. The *makam* used were believed to originate from the Seljuk era such as Rehavi, Huseyni, Rast, Buselik, Zirgule, Ussak, Hejaz, Iraqi, Esfahan, Neva, Buzurg and Zirekfend. Each *makam* had its own function in its effect on the patient and the use of each *makam* required particular timing. Benek et al. (2015) in describing this matter revealed that the *Buzurgmakam* was crooned to heal patients suffering from fear and anxiety. The best time to listen to it was after Isya' (night) prayers. However, selection of *makam* and timing were not interconnected because determination of timing depended on the physical and mental condition of a patient.

The second type of music is music with religious element. In Islam, some practices may be categorized as religious music (Saoud 2004). Among these are *adhan*, *talbiyah*, *zikir*, *tasbih* and recital of al-Quran. These are considered as religious as they are closely associated with Sufi practice. However, there are two differing views concerning religious music categorization of religious music as music per se. The first view is that Islamic practices may not be categorized as music. The second view states that music is relevant to such practice. Going back to the definition of music as previously stated, *adhan*, *talbiyah*, *zikir*, *tasbih* and recital of al-Quran have their own distinctive feature which may give a big impact on listeners.

The third type of music is the resulting effect of the hospital building itself. It is consistent with the views of Gorini (2007) and Erdal & Erbas (2013) that sounds, such as natural sounds resulting from the built-in environment of the hospital building, are included as a type of music. The hospital's built-in environment which offered special care to mental patients gave them significance indirectly resulting from its function. Among the natural sounds in the built-in hospital environment was the sound of the fountain water in the middle of the courtyard. The sound of canaries chirping was also a type of music indirectly used as there was a blossom garden where birds transit.

There were various methods of music application in healing with music. According to Gorini (2007) the main method was by using musical instruments. The main instruments used by the Arabs were 'the kings of instruments' in the Islamic civilization, that is, *ud* (lute) and *nay* (bamboo flute). Others were the zither, tambourine, gong and many more. In addition, application of music therapy in the Islamic civilization also recommended singing performances such as suggested by al-Razi. This is because it helped in the process of healing mental patients. The benefactor of Edirne Hospital (Isgandarova, 2015), for example, appointed 10 musicians consisting of 7 instrument players and 3 singers to entertain patients thrice weekly, while the built-in environment of some of the hospitals which applied natural music as music therapy used the sound of fountain water in the pool and chirping of birds in the blossom garden.

Function of Music Therapy in Islamic Civilization

Music therapy in the Islamic Civilization functioned to heal patients and connect them with Allah. It was usually used on patients with mental disorders such as insanity, depression and stress, paralysis and toothache. Although music therapy was complementary and did not fully heal the patient, it did calm the patient and prevented him from acting out of control, particularly insane patients (Erdal & Erbas 2013). In the Islamic civilization itself, there were some hospitals which accepted patients with mental disorders. The hospital also offered specific treatments such as appointing musicians and singers for the purpose of helping the patients.

For paralysis disorder, Shiloah (1995) explained that al-Kindi used music therapy to cure a paralysed child. Colaklar (2014) explained that Moses Hamun (Ibn Hamun), an Ottoman doctor of the 16th Century CE, had applied music therapy for toothache. According to Heyd (1963), the application of music therapy was used by Ibn Hamunas stated in a manuscript entitled '*Kitab Fi' tibb el-Esnan*' (The Law of Medicine) which discussed dentistry. Music therapy, usually associated with Sufis, also connects one with Allah. This group used music as the main medium to draw nearer to Allah.

Through the medium of *sama'* (Said, 2013) a listener is able to feel fear, sadness and a sense of longing, making him moan and weep. The effect of music on a person proved that music can have an effect on a person's psychology facilitating him to draw nearer to Allah.

Conclusion

Music therapy originates essentially from the philosophy and views of the Greek civilization, and was later re-shaped by Muslim scholars through the application of Islamic values. The relation between music and cosmology and astronomy was the early Greek philosophy which was later developed by al-Kindi and Ikhwan al-Safa', al-Razi, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) although the latter rejected any association between music and metaphysical elements. Despite being varied in views, this philosophy is the foundation to the application of music therapy as a treatment in physical and mental healthcare. Besides philosophy, music in Islamic culture also played an important role in contributing to healthcare, particularly in spiritual care for the soul, which is based on religious elements.

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