

The effects of Western music on postoperative pain in Taiwan

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Music is a method nurses can use to help relieve pain, however little is known about its effectiveness across cultures. In this study, Western music was tested for its effectiveness in reducing postoperative pain in 38 Taiwanese patients, and its acceptability was explored. A pretest and post-test experimental design was used with visual analogue scales to measure sensation and distress of pain. Before surgery, subjects were randomly assigned to receive tape recorded music or the usual care. Those who were assigned to the music group chose among 5 types of sedative music. On postoperative Day 1 and Day 2, the effectiveness of the tape-recorded music was investigated during 15 minutes of rest in bed. Patients were interviewed on Day 3 to determine their liking for the music, its calming effects, and the helpfulness of the music. Repeated measures analysis of variance showed a significant interaction between time and group in the distress of pain on Day 1, but not on Day 2, and in pain sensation on Day 2, but not Day 1. Subjects from Taiwan were similar to subjects in a previous study in the United States in their liking for the music, and in reports of the helpfulness of the music for pain sensation and distress, **but fewer Taiwanese found the music calming, and they had different choices: more chose harp music and fewer chose jazz than subjects in the U.S. study**, and some would prefer Buddhist hymns or popular songs heard in Taiwan. Findings support the use of culturally acceptable music in addition to analgesic medication for the sensation and distress of postoperative pain.

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