Author's response to reviews

Title: Perceived outcomes of music therapy with Body Tambura in end of life care - a qualitative pilot study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed our revised manuscript entitled “Perceived outcomes of music therapy with Body Tambura in end of life care - a qualitative pilot study” and below the point to point reply.

We are very grateful for the reviewer comments, which helped substantially to improve the manuscript.

Changes are marked in yellow.

We hope that our paper is now suitable for publication.

Sincerely,

Michael Teut

Reviewer 1:

1. General It is an interesting very explorative small study that may be interesting for the field of terminal palliative care. The study gives only indications about the possibility to apply this music therapy to palliative patients.

2. Background

More information is necessary about the Cochrane review in order to share the opinions of the authors. Give more information about the formal evaluations in this review.

Authors:

We added more information on the Cochrane review (line 49-64).

Reviewer 1:

3. Methods: The information about the applied method is sound and clear. It is not clear why only 8 patients were included.

Authors:
This was a pilot study with no funding. We aimed to identify possible outcome parameters for a quantitative study in future. It was feasible to enroll between 6 and 8 patients in the study (each patient received up to 5 sessions of therapy, some patients also received additional treatments by the therapists free of costs due to ethical reasons). We explain this in more detail (line 123-124).

Reviewer 1:
4. Data analysis: It is not clear which were the themes were the authors in the interview analysis were looking for. Was there an agreement about the three topics mentioned about the most important subjective experiences?

Authors:
We added information on the data analysis process (line 193-196) and discuss this topic now more in detail: „The four themes „feeling of relaxation“, changes in body sensation“, „Images and visualizations and „Connecting to family“ could clearly be coded and summarized from the patients‘ narrations. But the data did not allow us to generate further hypotheses about other treatment experiences. We believe that our data already covers the most important experiences, but of course, the inclusion of more patients in future trials might reveal additional relevant experiences.“ (line 304-311)

Reviewer 1:
6. Discussion: The discussion is rather long and needs headings for subsections. In the discussion studies are reported which could be better discussed in the introduction.

Authors:
We agree with the reviewer and moved a complete section from the discussion to the background section (line 49-87)

Reviewer 1:
Conclusion Needs revision.

Authors:
We revised the conclusion.

Reviewer 1:
The word effect in the title is misleading
Authors:
We changed the title from „perceived effects“ to „perceived outcomes“.

Reviewer 2:
There are many problems with English usage. I recommend that the authors invite someone to edit their article. A partial list of problems:
On pg. 2, omit the article "a" before music therapy
On pg. 3, use the word therapeutic instead of therapeutical in the sentence beginning, "The aim of....."
On pg. 4, Restate the sentence to read "Patients and their relatives were invited to participate....."
On pg. 5, Refer to the intervention rather than the music therapy. Instead of saying the "was performed by" , say "was facilitated by" to avoid confusion that music therapy may be seen as a performance rather than therapy. Restate the sentence about music therapists' experience to read, "Two music therapists who each had 10 years of professional experience." Instead of patient's demands, use the word "requirements".

Authors:
We corrected the above-mentioned mistakes and a native speaker edited the manuscript.

Reviewer 2:
2. As far as your future study design, consider the following:
On pg. 6, This is very important: The interview should not be conducted by the music therapists. This will introduce bias. The interview should be conducted by researchers other than the therapists.

Authors:
As described in the methods section only the interview questions were developed by the researchers and music therapists. The interviews were conducted and analyzed only by the researchers.

Reviewer 2:
3. Accuracy in citations: On pg. 12, You refer to the Gutgsell article as (17). According to your references, the article is actually (18). Please recheck all of your citations to be sure you are correctly identifying them.
Authors:
We corrected the references.

Reviewer 2:
General comments: I like the concept of your research and I think it has merit in the field of music therapy. I would like to see you use validated instruments to assess the efficacy of your intervention in your next study.

Editorial Request:
1. Copyediting - We recommend that you copyedit the paper to improve the style of written English.

Authors:
A native speaker edited the manuscript.

Editorial Request:
2. Competing Interest - Please include a 'Competing interests' section between the Conclusions and Authors' contributions. If there are none to declare, please write 'The authors declare that they have no competing interests'.
The questions that are asked of authors are:
Financial competing interests:
- In the past five years have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? Is such an organization financing this manuscript (including the article-processing charge)? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript? If so, please specify.
- Do you have any other financial competing interests? If so, please specify.
Non-financial competing interests: are there any non-financial competing interests (political, personal, religious, academic, ideological, intellectual, commercial or any other) to declare in relation to this manuscript? If so, please specify.

**Authors:**
We added information on author CD.

**Editorial Request:**
3. Authors’ Contributions - Please include an 'Authors' contributions' section before the Acknowledgements and Reference list.

**Authors:**
We added this section.