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Can musical or painting interventions reduce pain or improve mood, quality of life and cognition in patients with mild Alzheimer's disease?

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Among non-pharmacological therapies, musical intervention is often used for patients with Alzheimer's disease and patients presenting chronic pain. However, their efficacy is still under debate.

Aim: To determine the efficacy of choral singing versus painting sessions on chronic pain, mood, quality of life and cognition in patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Design: Multicenter randomized controlled trial

Methods: Fifty-nine mild AD patients were randomized to a 12-week singing (SG; N= 32) or painting group (PG; N=27). Chronic pain, anxiety, depression, quality of life, were assessed before, after and 1 month after the sessions. Cognitive abilities were assessed before and after interventions. The evolution of these different measures was assessed with mixed linear models. Only significant effects $p < .05$ were reported here below.

Results: Both singing and painting interventions led to significant pain reduction (Time effect: $F = 9.74; p < 0.0001$), reduced anxiety (Time effect: $F = 10.52; p < 0.0001$), improved Quality of Life (Time effect: $F = 6.61; p = 0.002$) and improved executive function ($F = 14.82; p < 0.0001$). Depression was reduced over time in SG only (Time x Group effect: $F = 3.81; p = 0.03$). Verbal Memory performance remained stable over time in SG, but decreased in PG (Time x group effect: $F = 9.29; p = 0.004$).

Conclusion: Findings suggest that singing and painting interventions may reduce pain and improve mood, quality of life and cognition in patients with mild AD, with differential effects of painting for depression and singing for memory performance.

Biography

Isabelle Rouch has completed her MD in Epidemiology and Public Health and her PhD in neuroepidemiology from Bordeaux medical University. She is working as a physician in the Memory Centre of the Neurology Unit from Saint Etienne University Hospital.

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