

Preliminary steps to facilitate the use of music in medicine in Slovenia

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INTRODUCTION

B-AIR Art Infinity Radio - Creating sound art for babies, toddlers and vulnerable groups served as a starting point for various projects and research aims to sensitize medical community and general public to consider music as a relevant agent in health care.

The B-AIR network includes various institutions, from national radio broadcasters to research institutes, universities, NGOs, children's hospitals and retirement homes. Connecting more than 100 different profiles of professionals, such as artists, researchers, media professionals, etc. with target audience, it is raising awareness of audio sensibility from an early age onwards, primarily focusing on the impact of the audio pathway (sound, voice, words, music) on cognitive, emotional and personal development, as well as health and disease. Prototypes of new models and production standards are presented in artistic settings, as well as in environments where the subjects of art and sound can be considered as a possible developmental and transformative factor. Apart from a purely intuitive artistic approach, the aim of the consortia is to stimulate reflection on the role, sensory and semantic impact of sound in our lives by incorporating scientific research and presenting it in slow journalistic production.

A plan was developed to sensitize the medical community and general public to consider music as a relevant agent in health care. We present the findings of the current efforts, namely:

1) A dedicated (ongoing) series of radio interviews "Soundings" on topics between music and medicine with guests from Slovenia and abroad.

2) A questionnaire for health professionals about where music could be introduced in research/ practice with the best chance to improve patient care.

3) Beginnings of collaborations and creations for a Slovene Hospital radio.

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How to use the radio as a platform acquisition and dissemination of knowledge to facilitate the use of music in healthcare?

RADIO INTERVIEWS

A series of professional radio talks about the use of music in healthcare with eminent guests and conversations were led by Igor Mihael Ravnik, MD and also available as podcasts.

THE AIM: *sharing the knowledge and experience of good practices* → **promote the use of music in Slovenian healthcare system & raise awareness of positive effects of music in the society.** In times of multisensory overstimulation (accentuated by the recent pandemic) people of any age may benefit from more dedicated use of the acoustic channel.

The topics of the talks covered a vast set of topics and professionals, among others: Music and the brain (*Stefan Koelsch*), Mozart Sonata K448 and epilepsy (*Ivan Rektor*), Beginnings of music therapy in central Europe (*Darko Breitenfeld*), Music education and music therapy (*Giuseppe Pino Poolen, Vali Glavič Tretnjak*), Using music therapy for haemato-oncological paediatric patients and patients with dementia (*Mihaela Kavčič*), First steps into the world of sound and music (*Katarina Kompan Erzar*).

The 8 emissions received a total of 16000 listeners over radio, 978 views via the internet (M=122,25, SD=66,74) and 113 downloads of the podcasts (M=14,125, SD=2,9), which shows that there is some interest, but which is currently limited to highly motivated professional core groups.

SURVEY

A questionnaire was developed to investigate the interest and motivation of introducing music into the health system among Slovenian physicians.

50 musically active physicians were invited to participate in a pilot study about potential uses of music-based interventions in Slovenian health-care system with a response rate of 32% (16/50).

Key findings:

- 1) All participants agreed *systematic education among healthcare workers about the benefits of music would be necessary*. Only one participant was convinced that they have a good understanding of the benefits of incorporating music in healthcare settings.
- 2) Music is already used in some settings, such as background music in waiting rooms, clinics and surgery rooms. Participants had many suggestions for potential use of music in the health-care system. Six of the most common suggestions are displayed in Figure 1.
- 3) Many ideas about the possible introduction of music in healthcare settings are met with doubt about feasibility of implementation of such interventions, mostly due to problems with technical equipment, music selection and work overload.

HOSPITAL RADIO

- Connecting renowned experts of different backgrounds with a group of artists to apply the knowledge of the effects of audio pathways on a child's cognitive, emotional and personality development, resulting in sound artworks for hospitalised children.
- Primary and secondary gains:
 - 1) *Entertain, educate, relax* → serve as model for using music and words for specific situations (i.e. soothing pre- and post-op anxiety in children).
 - 2) *Change the everyday noise level on the ward* → prompt parents to think about the quality of life outside of the hospital.
- Connections have been established, preliminary plans were proposed, responsible parties have confirmed interest.
- Current hospital radio prototype implemented for children in the Division of Paediatrics, UMC Ljubljana.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

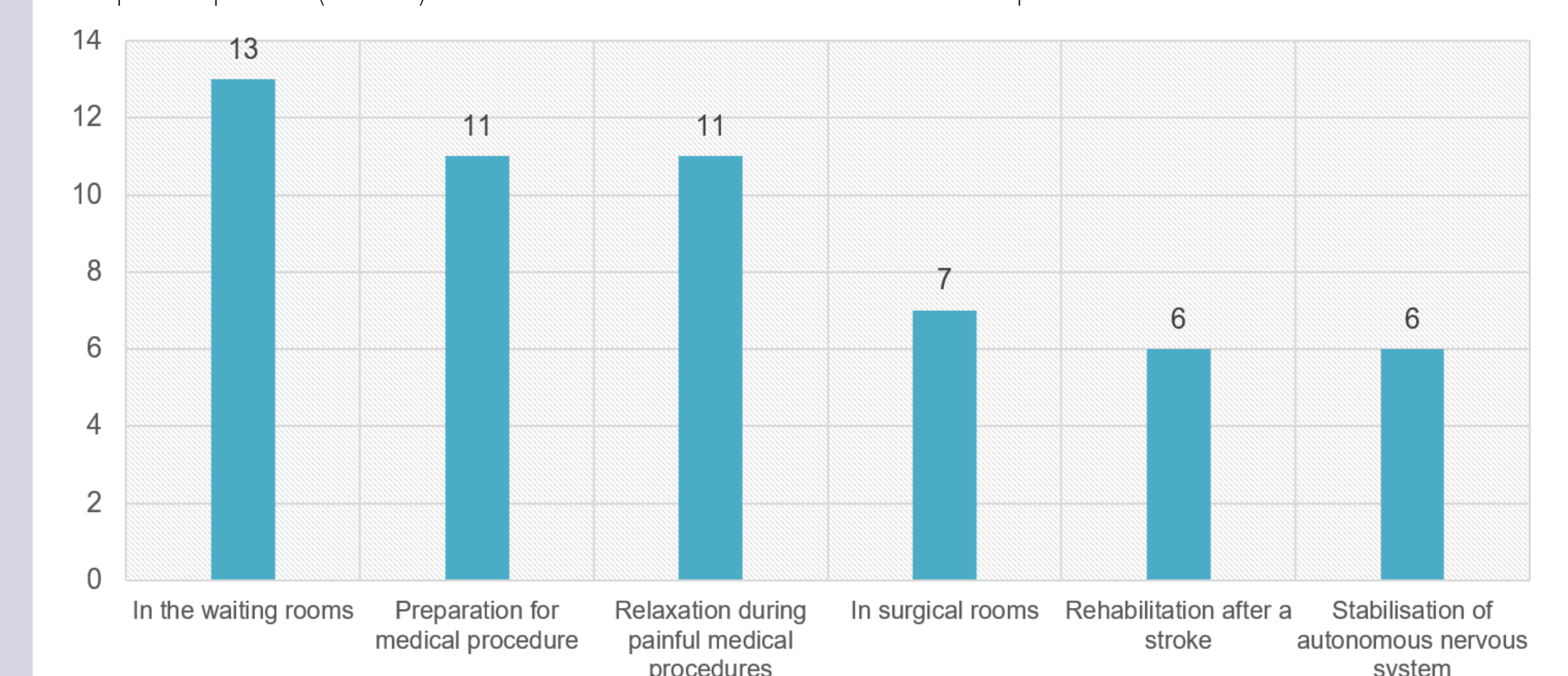
1) **INTEGRATION:** Discussions in forms of round tables/podcasts bringing together people with ideas from settings not strictly belonging to highly hierarchical and closed organizations and institutions to wield stronger echo effects and trigger more active endeavours to implementing change

2) **IMPLEMENTATION:** Improvement of the questionnaire, analysis on a bigger sample size, setting up a core-task group, increasing knowledge in specific areas of medicine, promoting research in basic and clinical field, collecting/developing/introducing diagnostic instruments assessing music-related abilities in vulnerable groups, and including the topic of music and medicine into professional meetings of various health professionals

3) **CREATION:** Exchanging ideas of good practices to establish a sustainable international hospital radio and increase the volume of quality artistic audio content for vulnerable groups. Regular broadcasting of hospital radio sound contents for children in children's hospitals in Ljubljana and Zagreb. Monitoring and evaluation report, measuring the effects and proposing guidelines for further development

4) A SINAPSA Neuroscience Conference in September 2021 will feature 4 topics on Music and medicine. The Slovenian Neurological Association Congress 2021 is also expected to feature these topics.

Figure 1. Six examples of implementation of music in healthcare that the participants (N=16) found would be most feasible to implement.



FUTURE QUESTIONS

- 1) How to circumvent obstacles such as the diversity of music tastes?
- 2) How to spread awareness and educate medical staff and management about the usefulness of musical interventions?
- 3) Would starting by including music in currently silent healthcare rooms (such as certain waiting rooms, delivery rooms etc.) reduce resistance among staff for including more intensive interventions?
- 4) Which are the steps and instruments that would allow for (clinical) application and introduction of music in medical settings?
- 5) Any examples of good practice in similar projects to share? Contacts welcome!