



Bringing Live Music to Malaysian Hospitals

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In the light of realizing the healing power of music, the Malaysian Society for Music in Medicine (MSMM) has recently been set up, aiming to promote the therapeutic use of music in clinical settings, encompassing prevention and maintenance of physical or psychological well-being. Members of this society comprise of professionals in the complementary and allied health fields who support the application of music-related activities through synergistic collaborations, empirical research, and networking with international organisations with similar goals.

Among the areas where music can be applied in conjunction with standard conventional medical interventions include:

- Obstetric: prenatal care, pain reduction in labour and delivery
- Surgery: perioperative analgesia and anaesthesia
- Rehabilitation: physiotherapy and post-stroke physical rehabilitation
- Neurology: Parkinsonism and dementia care
- Psychology/Psychiatry: post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety/depression and psychotic disorders
- Paediatrics: children with special needs
- Oncology/Palliative: pain management and preparation for death
- Prison populations and substance abuse

The first MSMM activity of the year kicked off with a Mother's Day celebration at the Selayang Hospital, Kuala Lumpur. Co-organized with Kasih Hospice Care Society, two of the MSMM committee members, namely Dr Sharon Chong of DSY Wellness & Longevity Center and Assistant Professor James Yeow of UCSI University, went from bed to bed to provide musical relief. Equipped with instruments such as guitars, violin, flute, rainstick, including angelic voices of Kasih Hospice volunteers, we serenaded the cancer patients with songs in Malay, English and Chinese languages.



(photo courtesy of Kasih Hospice Society, Malaysia)

It cannot be denied that our live singing and the soothing sounds of the musical accompaniments touched the hearts of the patients, family members, and staff of the ward. Some patients joined along in the singing and dancing while others could be seen lighting up with smiles of joy and serenity. A female patient remarked that for a moment, her cancer pain was gone when we filled her private room with familiar tunes. She was visibly moved and was continuously expressing her gratitude for lighting up her day as we moved on to other rooms.



(photo courtesy of Kasih Hospice Society, Malaysia)

From this event, we are even more convinced of the power of music to enhance harmony, healing, and hope for the terminally ill patients. Music indeed reaches to the depths of the soul apart from providing pain relief with lesser reliance on anaesthesia, expression of suppressed feelings, recollection of long forgotten memories, improving gross and fine motor functioning, controlling stress hormones, improving immunity, cultivating creativity, and eliciting social interaction. With the ever increasing availability of international peer-reviewed journals dedicated to the study of music in medical settings, we would like to see the Malaysian medical fraternity support the use of music for the benefit of all citizens.