

## Role of music therapy in improving social skills in autism spectrum disorder children

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**Background:** As most of the approved conventional interventions and pharmacotherapy do not alleviate the core symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) completely, more and more parents seek for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). Music Therapy (MT) is considered as non-biological CAM therapy in treating children with autism. The aim of the study is to identify the effectiveness of Music Therapy in improving social skills of children with autism.

**Materials and Methods:** This is a randomized controlled trial where twenty children diagnosed with ASD on the basis of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) V criterion, aged 5 to 14 years, practiced MT for three days a week, 30 minutes a session, for 3 months, in addition to occupational therapy. Another set of twenty ASD diagnosed children, age and severity matched, continued with occupational therapy only. Social skills level of both the groups was measured and recorded with the help

of Social Responsiveness Scale 2 (SRS-2). The data was analyzed with Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, analysis of covariance was used to compare groups.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Hearing defect, auditory sensory concerns.

**Results:** In posttest, the results of covariance analysis showed a significant increase in social skills scores of the experiment group ( $P < 0.001$ ) having both music therapy and occupational therapy as compared to occupational therapy only.

**Conclusions:** The study showed that MT is an effective method with deep effects on improving social skills of children with autism.

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