

Role of Music in Maternal Care

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Abstract

Music plays an important supportive and therapeutic role in maternal care by positively influencing the physical, emotional, and psychological health of women during pregnancy, labour, and the postnatal period. Evidence suggests that the use of music in maternal care helps reduce stress, anxiety, and fear by encouraging relaxation and emotional balance. During pregnancy, calming music aids in stabilizing maternal mood, reducing blood pressure, and strengthening maternal–fetal bonding through auditory stimulation. During labour, music functions as a non-pharmacological method for pain relief and comfort. In the postnatal phase, music contributes to emotional healing and helps lower the risk of postpartum depression. Overall, music is a safe, affordable, and easily accessible complementary therapy that supports holistic maternal care and enhances the childbirth experience. This article highlights the benefits of music during pregnancy, labour, and the postnatal period, along with the different types of music recommended for use during maternal care.

Keywords: Music, therapeutic benefits, holistic maternal care, postpartum depression.

INTRODUCTION:

Music plays a significant role in maternal care by supporting both the emotional and physical health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. It helps in lowering stress and anxiety levels, encourages relaxation, and creates a peaceful and positive atmosphere. Music also strengthens the bond between mother and baby and offers comfort as well as pain relief during labour. Overall, music is a safe, simple, and effective supportive method in maternal care.

TYPES OF MUSIC USED IN MATERNAL CARE

Music used in maternal care is chosen to promote relaxation, emotional well-being, and comfort during pregnancy, labour, and the postnatal period. The main types include:

1. Classical Music

Gentle classical compositions help reduce stress, anxiety, and blood pressure while promoting relaxation.

2. Instrumental Music

Music without lyrics, such as flute, piano, violin, or harp, creates a soothing environment and helps mothers relax and concentrate.

3. Lullabies

Soft lullabies enhance maternal–fetal bonding and provide a calming effect during pregnancy and after birth.

4. Nature Sounds

Natural sounds like rainfall, ocean waves, birds, or flowing water promote calmness and may reduce the

perception of labour pain.

5. **Devotional or Spiritual Music**

Bhajans, chants, hymns, or prayers provide emotional support, spiritual comfort, and inner peace, and are especially valued in maternal care in India.

6. **Soft Vocal or Light Music**

Slow, gentle songs with soothing voices help lower anxiety levels and enhance emotional well-being.

7. **Cultural or Traditional Music**

Listening to familiar regional or folk music provides emotional reassurance and promotes a feeling of comfort and security.

8. **Guided Relaxation or Meditation Music**

Music combined with guided breathing or meditation techniques helps reduce stress and prepares the mother for labour.

9. **Mother's Preferred Music**

Any music that the mother personally enjoys and finds relaxing can be effective, as individual preference plays a significant role in calming the mind.

BENEFITS OF MUSIC DURING PREGNANCY

1. **Lowers Stress and Anxiety:** Pregnancy often involves emotional fluctuations, stress, and worry. Gentle and soothing music helps decrease stress hormones such as cortisol, calming the mind and creating a peaceful feeling for the mother.
2. **Enhances Emotional Well-Being:** Listening to enjoyable music uplifts mood and reduces feelings of fear, sadness, and mood swings. It promotes positive emotions and emotional stability throughout pregnancy.
3. **Strengthens Mother–Baby Bonding:** When a pregnant woman listens to music, the unborn baby can hear it inside the womb. This shared musical experience helps build a strong emotional connection between the mother and her baby.
4. **Supports Fetal Brain Development:** From about the 20th week of pregnancy, the fetus begins to hear sounds. Music stimulates brain activity and aids the development of hearing, memory, and learning abilities.
5. **Improves Quality of Sleep:** Many expectant mothers experience sleep disturbances. Soft and slow music before bedtime helps relax the body and mind, leading to deeper and more restful sleep.
6. **Helps Regulate Blood Pressure:** Relaxing music calms the nervous system, which may help reduce elevated blood pressure, especially in pregnant women with mild hypertension.
7. **Reduces Physical Discomfort:** Music acts as a natural pain reliever by diverting attention from pregnancy-related discomforts such as back pain, tiredness, and nausea.
8. **Promotes Relaxation and Mindfulness:** Music encourages pregnant women to stay focused on the present moment. This relaxation improves breathing patterns and supports overall physical and mental calmness.
9. **Improves Baby's Response After Birth:** Babies who are exposed to music during pregnancy may recognize the same music after birth. This familiarity can help soothe the baby and reduce crying.
10. **Encourages a Positive Pregnancy Experience:** Overall, music helps create a peaceful and pleasant atmosphere during pregnancy. It supports mothers in feeling more relaxed, confident, and emotionally positive throughout this period.

BENEFITS OF MUSIC DURING LABOR

Music is a natural, safe, and effective approach that helps women manage labour. It contributes to both physical comfort and emotional well-being during childbirth.

1. **Reduces Labour Pain:**

Music helps divert attention away from pain and contractions. It encourages the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain-relieving chemicals. Gentle, rhythmic music can lessen the sensation of pain without the need for medication.

2. **Lowers Anxiety and Fear:**

Labour often brings feelings of fear, stress, and nervousness. Calming music helps reduce anxiety levels, providing emotional comfort and helping the mother remain relaxed and confident.

3. **Promotes Relaxation:**

Soft music helps relax muscles and reduce physical tension. When the body is relaxed, the cervix may dilate more easily, supporting smoother progress during Labour.

4. **Assists with Breathing Control:**

Music with a steady and soothing rhythm supports slow, deep breathing. Controlled breathing helps manage pain, conserve energy, and maintain calmness during contractions.

5. **Enhances Emotional Support:**

Listening to familiar or preferred music helps women feel comfortable and secure. It creates a calm and positive atmosphere in the Labour room and can lessen feelings of loneliness during Labour.

6. **Decreases the Length of Labour:**

Music-induced relaxation supports effective uterine contractions. Lower stress hormone levels allow labour to progress more smoothly, which may help reduce the overall duration of labour.

7. **Minimizes the Need for Pain Relief Medications:**

Music helps women cope better with labour pain. As a result, the use of painkillers or epidural anesthesia may be reduced, supporting a more natural childbirth process.

8. **Strengthens Mother–Infant Bonding:**

Soothing music provides a peaceful environment for the newborn. Babies can recognize sounds they were exposed to during pregnancy, which encourages early bonding after birth.

9. **Improves Satisfaction with the Childbirth Experience:**

Women who listen to music during labor often report greater satisfaction. Music offers a sense of comfort and control, making childbirth a more positive and memorable experience.

10. **Safe, Easy, and Economical Approach:**

Music therapy is free from side effects and simple to use in both home and hospital settings. It requires minimal resources, such as a mobile phone or speaker.

BENEFITS OF MUSIC DURING THE POSTNATAL PERIOD

1. **Reduces Stress and Anxiety:** Music helps relax the mother's mind and lowers emotional stress following childbirth.

2. **Helps Prevent Postpartum Depression:** Calming music can improve mood and enhance emotional well-being during the postnatal phase.

3. **Encourages Relaxation and Better Sleep:** Listening to gentle music promotes relaxation, which supports improved sleep quality for new mothers.

4. **Reduces pain and discomfort:** Music helps divert attention from postnatal pain and physical

uneasiness after delivery.

5. **Strengthens mother–infant bonding:** Listening to or singing music together enhances emotional connection between the mother and the baby.
6. **Promotes breastfeeding:** Calming music reduces stress and anxiety, which can support better milk production and flow.
7. **Improves emotional balance:** Music assists in regulating mood changes and encourages positive emotional states.
8. **Aids faster recovery:** Relaxation through music contributes to quicker physical and psychological healing.
9. **Enhances infant development:** Soft, soothing music supports the baby’s brain growth and sensory development.
10. **Offers emotional comfort:** Music provides emotional support, decreases feelings of isolation, and increases happiness.

Conclusion:

Music plays a significant role in maternal care by lowering stress, relieving pain, and encouraging relaxation during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. It supports emotional health, strengthens mother–child bonding, and helps create a calm and positive childbirth experience.

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