

MUSIC THERAPY: IBN SINA'S APPROACH OF USING MUSIC AS MEDICINE

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Annotation

Music therapy has gained renewed interest in modern medical practices, but its roots can be traced back centuries to early scholars like Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who recognized music's therapeutic potential. This article delves into the pioneering ideas of Ibn Sina, especially from his work *The Book of Healing*, and examines how he perceived music as a form of medicine. The paper also explores the scientific connection between musical rhythms and human physiology, particularly the heart rate, while linking these ancient practices to modern applications of music therapy in Uzbekistan. Finally, it suggests methods to enhance the role of music therapy in contemporary healthcare systems.

Key words: Music Therapy, Ibn Sina, *The Book of Healing*, Therapeutic Music, Heart Rate and Music, Uzbek Modern Medicine, Holistic Healthcare, Physiological Effects of Music

Introduction

Music therapy, as a discipline, is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals, such as reducing stress, improving mood, and enhancing cognitive functions. Although today's music therapy programs are often associated with modern psychology and neurology, the practice has deep historical roots. Throughout history, scholars have explored music's effect on the mind and body. One of the earliest proponents of using music for healing was the Persian polymath Ibn Sina (also known as Avicenna in the West), who lived during the Islamic Golden Age. His philosophical and medical theories laid down a framework for understanding the link between the human soul and physical well-being, with music acting as a bridge between the two.

The current resurgence of interest in holistic approaches to healthcare opens the door for examining Ibn Sina's ideas, particularly in light of the evidence linking music to neurological and physiological processes. This article explores how music therapy, rooted in ancient traditions, has evolved into a recognized field and its potential for modern medical applications, with a focus on Uzbekistan's healthcare system.

How the music therapy was born

The origins of music therapy can be traced back to various ancient civilizations. The Greeks, for instance, believed in the doctrine of ethos, which held that music could directly influence human emotions and even morality. However, it was during the Islamic Golden Age that the medicinal properties of music were deeply explored in a scientific manner. This exploration was most prominently carried out by Ibn Sina, whose ideas revolutionized the medical understanding of the time.

Ibn Sina's interest in the connection between the mind, body, and soul led him to explore the therapeutic properties of music. In his time, physicians and scholars believed that disease was not just a physical ailment but could also stem from an imbalance within the soul. Ibn Sina viewed music as a means of treating both the physical and psychological aspects of disease, particularly emotional and mental illnesses. He saw music as a tool to influence the 'humors' of the body—a concept derived from the theory of the four humors in ancient Greek medicine—and to balance emotional states, which, in turn, would contribute to overall health.

In particular, Ibn Sina's understanding of rhythmic patterns and their effect on the body anticipated modern findings on how music can affect heart rate, respiratory function, and brainwave activity. His work emphasized the psychological effects of melody and rhythm, proposing that certain modes and scales could induce specific mental states. This early framework laid the foundation for what we now recognize as music therapy.

The Book of Healing by Ibn Sina

One of Ibn Sina's most famous works, *The Book of Healing* (Kitab al-Shifa), is an encyclopedic volume that covers a wide range of topics, including logic, natural sciences, mathematics, and medicine. Within this vast text, Ibn Sina touches upon the therapeutic potential of music in several contexts, reflecting his holistic approach to medicine. He was among the first scholars to recognize music's influence not only on emotional well-being but also on physical health, particularly through its regulation of bodily functions.

In *The Book of Healing*, Ibn Sina explains that music, when applied correctly, can balance the four humors of the body—blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. According to the prevailing medical theories of his time, disease was often the result of an imbalance among these humors. By influencing the patient's emotional state, music could help restore equilibrium and contribute to recovery. For example, slow, calming music was believed to cool the blood and



reduce inflammation, while faster, more energetic rhythms could stimulate the body and lift the spirits of those suffering from depression or melancholia.

Additionally, Ibn Sina categorized different musical modes and their specific effects on the mind and body. His understanding of how sound waves and vibrations affect human physiology was ahead of its time, prefiguring modern-day discoveries about how music interacts with the nervous system, alters brainwave patterns, and modulates heart rate variability.

Musical Rhythm and Human Heart Rate

In modern science, there is substantial evidence supporting the idea that musical rhythms can influence human physiology, particularly heart rate. The relationship between music and heart rate has been the subject of numerous studies that indicate music's ability to synchronize with bodily rhythms. Faster tempos tend to increase heart rate and induce arousal or excitement, while slower tempos can relax the body and lower heart rate. This concept aligns closely with Ibn Sina's theories about how music could influence the internal humors and restore balance within the body.

Scientific studies using electrocardiograms (ECGs) and heart rate variability (HRV) measures have shown that music can act as a tool to manage stress, anxiety, and cardiovascular conditions. Slow, soothing music has been found to induce parasympathetic nervous system activity, leading to a reduction in blood pressure and heart rate. On the other hand, upbeat, rhythmic music can stimulate sympathetic nervous system activity, leading to heightened alertness and readiness.

Ibn Sina's holistic approach resonates with these modern findings. He intuitively understood that rhythms and melodies could affect both the mind and body, and he employed this knowledge in treating patients. While he lacked the scientific tools available today, his observations about the interplay between music and physiological processes are supported by modern cardiology and neurology.

The Implication of Music Therapy in Uzbek Modern Medicine

In contemporary Uzbekistan, the role of traditional medicine, including music therapy, has been increasingly explored. While Western biomedical approaches dominate much of the healthcare system, there has been a growing interest in integrating traditional therapies, especially in the field of mental health and rehabilitation. Music therapy, rooted in the region's rich cultural history and inspired by scholars like Ibn Sina, is gaining recognition as a complementary treatment in various medical settings.



Uzbek hospitals and rehabilitation centers have started incorporating music therapy programs to treat patients suffering from anxiety, depression, and trauma. In many cases, the therapy is used as a non-invasive, holistic method to support conventional treatments. For example, patients recovering from surgery or dealing with chronic illnesses are often exposed to calming musical sessions to help lower stress levels, reduce pain perception, and aid in faster recovery.

Moreover, Uzbekistan's musical heritage, with its deeply rhythmic and melodic traditions, offers an ideal foundation for developing culturally resonant music therapy practices. Local musicians and healers are working together to explore how traditional Uzbek music, with its specific scales and modes, can be adapted for therapeutic purposes. This reflects a contemporary application of Ibn Sina's principles, demonstrating that his ancient insights remain relevant in today's healthcare landscape.

Conclusion

To fully realize the potential of music therapy, both in Uzbekistan and globally, several approaches need to be embraced. First, further scientific research should be conducted to provide more robust clinical evidence on the effects of music on various medical conditions. This will help integrate music therapy more deeply into mainstream healthcare systems.

Additionally, the development of standardized music therapy protocols and training programs for therapists is crucial. This can ensure that music therapy is administered by skilled practitioners who understand the cultural, emotional, and physiological dimensions of the treatment.

Finally, international collaborations between musicians, healthcare providers, and researchers can foster a global exchange of knowledge, allowing countries like Uzbekistan to combine traditional methods with modern medical technologies. By following these steps, the ancient wisdom of scholars like Ibn Sina can continue to inspire and inform the development of holistic healthcare practices for future generations

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