



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

The study examined the effect of listening to soothing piano music on headphones on the anxiety levels of people having root canals.

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

Dental clinic design should support listening to music via headphones during root canal procedures.

Randomised Controlled Trial of Music on State Anxiety and Physiological Indices in Patients Undergoing Root Canal Treatment

Lai, H., Hwang, M., Chen, C., Chang, K., Peng, T., Chang, F.
2008 / Journal of Clinical Nursing
Volume 17, Issue 19, Pages 2654-2660

Key Concepts/Context

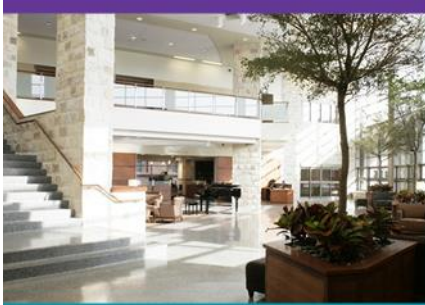
People who were able to listen to soothing piano music on headphones during root canal procedures were less anxious than people who did not listen to the music during the same procedure.

Methods

Forty-four total patients were randomly assigned to listen to soothing piano music during a root canal or not. There were 22 participants in each group, and the people in the second group who didn't listen to music still wore headphones during their root canal but no recordings of music or anything else were presented via those headphones. Measures of physiological conditions such as heart rate, blood pressure, and finger temperature were taken before the headphones began to be worn and every 10 minutes until the end of the procedure. Anxiety was measured via a written questionnaire before anyone began to listen to music and immediately after the procedure.

Findings

The root canal patients who listened to soothing piano music via headphones had significantly lower anxiety levels after the procedure than the people who didn't listen to the music. Their finger temperature was also significantly higher. The reason that finger temperature was measured was not stated in the article, although it seems that finger temperature is related to anxiety levels and that people with warmer fingers are less anxious.



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Limitations

- Data were collected every 10 minutes during the procedure, but this sort of data collection is, according to the authors, “not as accurate as continuous measurement.”
- Subjects were not blind to the experimental manipulation.
- It is unclear how music preferences may have affected study results, although all participants who listened to music did indicate a preference for the sort of music they heard.