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## The effectiveness of music interventions on stress reduction: results of a meta-analysis

**Martina de Witte**

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Listening to music and music making have been associated with a broad range of positive outcomes in the domains of health and well-being. Stress is believed to be one of the major factors negatively affecting our health in the 21st century and high stress levels have been shown to be strongly associated with many physical and emotional problems, such as cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, anxiety disorders, depression and burnout. Music interventions are used for stress reduction in all kinds of settings because of the assumed positive effects of music on stress reduction. Stress manifests itself as physiological arousal, indicated by increases in heart rate, blood pressure and hormonal levels. These physical components are also being influenced by music. More and more neurological evidence is available regarding the effects of music on stress regulation. Due to this growing body of evidence a meta-analysis of 69 randomized controlled trials (RCT), containing 235 effect sizes and 6,969 participants, were performed to assess the strength of the effect of music interventions on stress-related outcomes. Results are promising and show significant overall effects. Further, main results also provide evidence regarding the moderating factors of the music interventions which leads to the best effects. Implications for theory and practice are discussed regarding the use of music interventions for stress reduction.

### Biography

Martina de Witte, MA, MT-BC, NMT, is Lecturer and Researcher in Music Therapy and Coordinator of Research & Innovation at the Institution of Arts Therapies of HAN University of Applied Sciences in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. She is a Senior Certified Music Therapist at STEVIG (The Netherlands); a mental health institution for psychiatric treatment to people with mild intellectual disabilities. In partnership with the University of Amsterdam and the research group KenVak, she is running a PhD program. Her PhD program is focused on the effect of music (therapy) on arousal regulation in people with mild intellectual disabilities and stress related problems. The meta-analysis which is central in this presentation is one of the studies of this PhD program and offers a comprehensive overview of the effect of music interventions on stress regulation. Her work mainly focuses on bringing together the latest scientific evidence about the effects of music on stress regulation with everyday practice of music therapists and other professionals.

martina.dewitte@han.nl