

## M&R at the 7<sup>th</sup> LPHA Conference, Amman, 7-8 March 2016

(contd).

The conference was a unique opportunity for Liliane Younes and Deborah Parker, M&R project coordinators for NISCVT and PM respectively, to deepen contextual knowledge in Palestinian health issues, in order to better understand how to develop M&R.

The poster presentation of our project was appreciated for its innovation as a complementary therapeutic resource in mental health and psycho-social support. Furthermore, the presentation gave significant exposure to Beit Atfal Assumoud as one of the leading Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon targeting specifically health and mental health issues amongst its programmes for the refugees communities.

Here is the abstract for the poster:

*Background:* The poster presents the first results of M&R, a pilot project running since 2012 responding to the NISCVT's search for effective additional treatments to complement its standard mental health program protecting the young Palestinian refugee population of Lebanon. Clinical music therapy (MT) is well established in Europe and USA within mental health care, developing evidence-based practice for a wide range of pathologies present in the Palestinian refugee community, including anxiety and depression disorders. In addition, practice in post-war and conflict zones has produced clinical results indicating that MT is effective in treating trauma and stress. The objectives of the project were to introduce clinical MT training and practice, to monitor direct effects on the children receiving treatment and indirect effects on the wider community.

*Methods:* Over M&R's first 3 years (2012-15), a clinical training strategy plan has been developed for the NISCVT local MT team, with periodic training periods, supervision, follow-up, and the constitution of a self-supporting 'Intervision' group which meets regularly each month. Some 200 children have been treated, individually or in groups, in NISCVT's 5 Family Guidance Clinics serving almost all the refugee camps in the country. Qualitative evidence has been collated through interviews, clinical observation and case studies. An approved and tested evaluation method, Individualized Music Therapy Assessment Profile, was introduced in 2013 and 25% of the children treated during the period January 2013-June 2014 were assessed by this method at the beginning and at the end of treatment.

*Discussion:* The context of 'M&R', namely a socially and politically deprived and marginalised community, together with the consequences of the escalation of the Syrian crisis within the host country Lebanon, have contributed to a high number of uncontrollable variables in the project, undermining operational stability and the constancy of qualitative and quantitative data collection. However, both types of data point consistently to positive results for children in MT treatment programs and improvements for their families and communities. The development of the NISCVT MT team, through the training program has also shown very positive results, as observed in the Intervision reports.

*Conclusions:* MT appears to be effective in reducing stress symptoms in Palestinian refugee children and adolescents, stabilizing affect regulation and improving expression and communication abilities. More specific and clinically controlled research is necessary in this field, which would appear to offer an important additional resource for mental health care within the suffering Palestinian population, wherever it may be.

**Keywords:** music therapy; pediatric mental health; clinical training; stress symptoms

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