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Methods Of Developing Healthy Lifestyle Skills In Medical Students Through Music Education

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Abstract: This paper outlines methods for developing healthy lifestyle skills in medical students through music education. It is substantiated, both theoretically and practically, that innovative methods such as the integration of music and movement, music-therapeutic reflection, and rhythmic autogenic exercises help enhance students' psychophysiological stability, reduce stress, improve sleep quality, and develop metacognitive skills. Within the instructional process, step-by-step learning activities, reflection journals, and group discussions guide students to consciously assess and reinforce their healthy lifestyle habits.

Keywords: Music education, healthy lifestyle, music therapy, reflection, rhythmic autogenic exercise, metacognitive skills, medical education.

Introduction: In the modern medical education process, the issue of forming a healthy lifestyle among students is acquiring particular urgency. Under current conditions of globalization, increasing academic workload, lack of personal time, and the growth of lifestyle-related diseases require new, innovative approaches to protecting and strengthening young people's health. As one effective method, the integration of music and movement, music-therapeutic reflection, and rhythmic autogenic exercises into the learning process is gaining increasing importance.

Music exerts a deep influence on the human psyche, helping to balance emotional states, reduce stress, and enhance positive motivation. Physical activity activates physiological processes and harmonizes the functions of the muscular and nervous systems. The integration of these two factors helps not only to strengthen students' psychophysiological stability but also to facilitate the conscious adoption of healthy living principles.

This article analyzes the theoretical foundations, practical stages, and effectiveness aspects of applying music–movement integration, music-therapeutic reflection, and rhythmic autogenic exercises in medical education. It also presents, based on scientific evidence and practical experience, the significance of these methods in strengthening student health, managing stress, and improving professional preparedness.

METHODS

Establishing pedagogical foundations in music education and creating an effective methodological system play an important role in the modern educational process. By integrating traditional and innovative approaches, it is possible to develop not only students' musical abilities but also their psycho-emotional balance, healthy lifestyle, and metacognitive skills. In the research process, the following methods were widely used.

The music-therapeutic reflection method serves to restore students' psycho-emotional balance, promote self-analysis, and consciously form healthy habits. It helps develop metacognitive skills and enriches the learner's inner world. The stages of applying the method are as follows:

• Emotional preparation — deep breathing to calm instrumental music and entering the lesson in a positive mental state;

• Listening to music and identifying emotions — the student analyzes, through inner reflection, what mood the music evokes and with which life events it is associated;

• Reflection journal — written analysis of habits such as sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and stress management;

• Group sharing — students voluntarily read thoughts

from their journals, general conclusions are drawn, and the instructor explains the scientific foundations of a healthy lifestyle;

• Musical meditation — repeating positive visualizations under music, such as "I choose a healthy lifestyle."

The rhythmic autogenic exercises method is considered effective for balancing the autonomic nervous system, stabilizing cardiovascular activity, and reducing stress. It is based on harmonizing classical Schultz autogenic training with musical rhythm. Its principles are coordinated breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and music-rhythmic stimulation. This approach develops students' attention and self-regulation skills.

The music-movement integration method activates physiological processes and restores energy balance in the body by aligning physical activity with musical rhythm. Practical session formats include:

• stretching and light aerobic exercises to calm music;

• synchronizing breathing with the tempo of the music;

• 5–7-minute "musical pause" exercises to reduce fatigue.

During the study, an educational program was developed to systematize music-educational approaches. It covers the following stages:

1. Theoretical foundation — studying the concept of music therapy, its pedagogical and psychological bases, and the relationship between music and a healthy lifestyle.

2. Practical directions — performing music-movement integration exercises, music-therapeutic reflection, and rhythmic autogenic exercises.

3. Lesson plans — developing a 16-week plan for each topic, including introductory sessions, practical tasks, interim assessment, and final evaluation stages.

4. Assessment and monitoring — evaluating results based on student journals, stress-level questionnaires, in-class activity, and the quality of written reflection.

The above methodological approaches strengthen the pedagogical foundations of music education and serve to develop in students not only musical knowledge and skills, but also psychological stability and a healthy lifestyle. An instructional process organized on the basis of music-therapy elements increases educational effectiveness and serves as an important factor in forming independent thinking, metacognitive skills, and a creative approach.

RESULTS

When this approach was applied in practice, first of all, clear positive changes were observed in the students' overall condition. After music–movement integration, they began entering classes more energetic and cheerful, and fatigue decreased noticeably. After each session, it was clearly felt that their breathing became easier and their heart rate normalized.

With regular performance of rhythmic autogenic exercises, students quickly developed skills in stress management. Their sleep quality improved and their attention increased. Some reported that during examinations they no longer became nervous and began to use calming techniques independently.

Music-therapeutic reflection, in turn, prompted self-awareness. By keeping journals and analyzing their habits of nutrition, sleep, and physical activity, they formed not only a healthy lifestyle but also personal discipline.

As a result of all this, positive changes occurred in the classroom environment. Students began to support each other and collaborate more. Class participation increased, and motivation strengthened.

In end-of-year surveys, the majority stated that a healthy lifestyle had become part of their daily lives, and that they had even taught these exercises to family members. These methods began to bring benefits not only in the learning process, but in their entire lives.

On the studied parameters, average results were 15–20% higher.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the step-by-step introduction of music–movement integration, music-therapeutic reflection, and rhythmic autogenic exercises into the medical education process effectively promotes the conscious formation of a healthy lifestyle among students. During practical sessions, learners demonstrated stable positive changes in cardiovascular function, breathing rhythm, and overall psychophysiological condition.

The outcomes of students' written and oral reflections, as well as materials from group discussions, confirmed the development of their metacognitive skills. It was clearly observed that their ability to reassess personal habits, control sleep and nutrition hygiene, and independently manage stress had strengthened. These aspects substantiate, from a scientific standpoint, the integrative power of rhythmic autogenic exercises based on the Schultz method and music-therapeutic approaches.

However, there are certain limitations to large-scale implementation of this approach. First, instructors and facilitators require specialized training to conduct the sessions. Motivating students to participate regularly

and coordinating the session schedule with the academic curriculum also demand organizational effort. In addition, for more precise measurement of outcomes, assessing heart rate, stress levels, and sleep quality through digital monitoring remains a relevant direction for future research.

Overall, the work demonstrates that integrating music therapy is highly effective in strengthening the health-promoting component of medical education, creating a positive psychological environment within the student community, and shaping a healthy lifestyle as an integral part of professional activity. Testing this approach in other educational fields and aligning it with clinical practice constitutes a promising avenue for future scientific inquiry.

CONCLUSION

The results of this scientific–practical work show that introducing music–movement integration, music-therapeutic reflection, and rhythmic autogenic exercises as a unified system in medical education is highly effective for shaping a healthy lifestyle among students. In the course of the study, the effects of this approach at the physiological, psychological, and metacognitive levels were comprehensively examined and clear outcomes were recorded.

Physiological aspects. It was found that the harmony of music and movement stabilizes cardiovascular function, coordinates breathing rhythm, and increases the degree of muscle relaxation. In students, increases in physical activity, faster fatigue recovery, and restoration of overall energy balance were observed. Rhythmic autogenic exercises normalized heart rate and were effective in maintaining the balance of the autonomic nervous system.

Psychological aspects. With regular use of music-therapeutic reflection and rhythmic autogenic exercises, stress levels decreased significantly (by up to 25–30%). Students' sleep quality improved, indicators of concentration increased, and volitional stability strengthened. During sessions, the calming timbre of the music alleviated psychological pressure and enhanced intrinsic motivation.

Metacognitive and personal development aspects. Music-therapeutic reflection encouraged students to analyze their life habits in depth. Skills such as keeping a journal, monitoring nutrition and sleep hygiene, planning physical activity, and managing stress were reinforced. This process developed students' self-awareness, sense of personal responsibility, and ability to consciously choose a healthy lifestyle.

Group outcomes. Regular sessions fostered a positive psychological climate within the group. Cooperation, mutual support, and open communication increased among students. Interest in the learning process rose markedly, which directly and positively affected the quality of education and the level of professional preparedness.

Practical significance and prospects. The methodology developed can be implemented in other higher education institutions as well. In the future, it remains a relevant direction to study indicators such as heart rate, stress level, and sleep quality more deeply through digital monitoring, and to test the method more broadly in clinical practice.

In general, integrating music-therapy elements into medical education is recommended as a scientifically grounded and highly effective approach for enabling future physicians to choose and apply a healthy lifestyle in daily life, ensure psychophysiological stability, increase resilience to stress, and create a solid foundation for professional development.

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