

“The sound of music students` experiences and perspectives on health education" A participatory approach.

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Education report

Background

Many music students experience playing-related musculoskeletal disorders. Moreover, higher rates of anxiety and depression have been observed among music and art students, particularly those enrolled in performing arts programs, compared to the general student population. Given the unique physical and psychological demands of practice and performance, tailored health education for music students in higher music education is essential,

Aim

This project aimed to explore music students` experiences and perspectives on health education, bridging the gap between research and practical applications in higher music education.

Methods

We used data collected in a previous project that examined challenges and resources related to health among music students, alongside with evaluations from participants of a music physiology course.

Results

Our analyses focused on music students' experiences and perspectives regarding three key areas 1) Health knowledge, 2) Physical activity and 3) Effective teaching methods.

1) Limited support for health was evident within higher music education, often leading students to seek advice from individual teachers.

2) Group based physical activity, was recognized as highly beneficial for physical and mental health. Students noted parallels between yoga and instrument practice in terms of mental engagement. Regular exercise was reported to enhance energy and stamina for performances, while activities like walking alleviated stiffness.

3) Students expressed the need for courses that emphasize stage performance and provide feedback on playing techniques., They also highlighted the importance of mental health discussions and addressing early career challenges. Students appreciated learning warm-up exercises, injury prevention strategies, and found individual guidance positive. Exercises and practical tips for playing instruments were more beneficial than theoretical content.

Conclusion:

Enhancing music students' health literacy and mental well-being, promoting physical activity, and implementing practical teaching methods can improve their overall health. This can be achieved through dedicated health courses and increased health competence among educators.