The Effects of Music on Pain and Anxiety During Screening Mammography

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One in four women who are diagnosed with breast cancer die annually, and the single most important way to prevent this is early detection; therefore, women older than 40 years should have an annual screening mammography. Many barriers have been reported that prevent compliance with this recommendation, including lack of insurance, fear, anxiety, pain, worry, and mistrust of the medical community. Nurses are in a position to use creative interventions, such as music therapy, to help minimize barriers. Although this study did not show that music therapy during screening mammograms decreased the amount of pain that the participants experienced, it did suggest that music therapy has the potential to decrease the amount of anxiety. Assisting patients in decreasing anxiety reduces barriers for screening mammography. The literature does suggest that music is a distraction for many populations of patients; however, when patients are faced with the possible diagnosis of breast cancer, it may be difficult to find an intervention to distract a woman’s mind, which was supported by the findings of this study.