

Portugal

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“Music most closely relates to the dynamic qualities that the mother and infant need to experience a ‘tuning’ process and guarantee emotional regulation.”

~Gisela Lenz & Dorothee von Moreau

Snapshot

Area

Portugal covers an area of 35,560 square miles and is located in Southern Europe at the Atlantic Ocean.

Population

10,562,178 (2011 estimate)

Official Language

Portuguese

Ethnic Groups

There are no census data on ethnic groups. However a significant number of people of African descent or African birth reside in Portugal.

Median Age

43.9 years (2013 estimate)

Children under 5

4.6% of the population.

Sources

Census 2011

National Institute of Statistics (INE)

Lisbon, Portugal

Demographics

Presently in Portugal, music therapy is gaining exposure in the Health, Education and Social Intervention fields. However, not many clinical practice settings exist. The Portuguese Music Therapy Association (APMT) promotes the field by organizing seminars, conferences and introductory courses on clinical applications in music therapy. The master's level training program in Lisbon contributes to the development of music therapy practice through establishing internship sites. Due to financial restrictions, paid work in music therapy is rarely available.

The exact number of clinicians practicing in Portugal is unknown. However, approximately 30 practitioners provide music therapy services in private practice, educational institutes, nursing homes, or medical and special education settings.

According to Portuguese law, early intervention services must be provided by a multidisciplinary team and include both the child and the family.

Background Information

The professional community's interest in music therapy dates back to the 1970's when a group of special education professionals began researching and inviting music therapy pioneers (e.g., Edith Lecourt, Amelia Oldfield, Joseph Moreno, Violeta Gaínza) to lecture in Portugal. Isolated self-taught interventions in medical hospitals, child psychiatric units and special education schools have been identified within the professional community, but it was not until the 1990's that a music therapy training program was established by French music therapist Jacqueline Verdeau-Paillées, and the Portuguese Music Therapy Association (APMT) was founded. In the 21st century, an expressive therapies

program that has since closed was established, and in 2004 the Music Therapy Master's program was started at the Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa.

Music therapy has grown primarily within the special education field. Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental disorders, learning difficulties, behavioral issues, intellectual and physical disabilities, and older adults are the populations serviced by music therapy practices in Portugal.

Common Approaches

Increased attention has been devoted to music therapy interventions in medical facilities (e.g., pain unit or pediatrics inpatient unit), OB/GYN private clinics, and multidisciplinary private practice clinics. Music therapist and interns have been included on multidisciplinary teams in these settings. There is also a growing demand from regular school settings, where professionals struggle with the challenges of inclusion as well as the management of an increasing number of children with behavioral and emotional issues.

Many Portuguese music therapy professionals have a music education training, thus the Orff method and the developmental approach to music therapy have been widely recognized. However, the psychoanalytic approach of French music therapists has clearly influenced those who come from a psychology or psychosocial rehabilitation background, working in psychiatry and in social intervention agencies.

The Nordoff-Robbins approach and the use of improvisation are emphasized in the Master's program, which leads some of its graduates to implement active music-making methods based on this approach. In fact, in more recent years, the Nordoff-Robbins principles have been progressively integrated with a psychodynamic approach, particularly with children with behavioral and emotional problems.

In Portugal, the field of early intervention is divided mainly between two types of settings: those which are clearly based on the medical model and those that are based on a psychodynamic approach. Accordingly, the services provided to young children strongly emphasizes relational and developmental aspects, beyond the regular early childhood stimulation and skill achievements. The emphasis on family-based interventions as well as the psychodynamic training of several pioneering music therapists created opportunities to work with young children and their primary caretakers.

The following agencies provide music therapy services to their clients in the Lisbon area:

- Instituto de Terapias Expressivas (a private center providing movement-based therapeutic intervention and music therapy services)
- CEBI Foundation (a non-profit organization with a residential facility for women and their babies, among other services)
- Hospital St^a Maria (Lisbon's main public hospital, inpatient

pediatrics unit, neonatal care unit, and child development center)

- Unidade de Primeira Infância (an early childhood outpatient care center at the main children's hospital in Lisbon), and
- "XS room" at the Lopas Play Center (a city-funded neighborhood day center for underprivileged children from Sintra county).

Prominent Literature

- Gisabel, A. (2012). *Musicoterapia e pediatria hospitalar. [Internship report monograph]*. Lisboa, Portugal: Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa.
- Mendes, L. (2012). *Musicoterapia e intervenção precoce: a comunicação e relação nas crianças em idade pré-escolar. [Internship report monograph.]* Lisboa, Portugal: Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa.

About the Author



Teresa Leite, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and music therapist, is the founder and coordinator of

the Music Therapy Master's program at Lusíada University. She also serves as the President of APMT.

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