

Title of Presentation: Difficulties and Challenges in the development of medical music therapy in multicultural Singapore

Abstract:

Singapore is the second most densely populated independent country in the world with a multi-racial, ethnic and religious population of 5.54 million people. It is located at the southern tip of the Malayan Peninsular, slightly north of the equator, and became independent in 1965 . It has seen steadily progressed to first world status as one of the world's busiest sea ports as well as one of the world's most expensive cities to live in.

The population comprises of 74% Chinese, 14% Malay, 8% Indian and 1.4% others, including Eurasians, or those of mixed European-Asian parentage. The mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and European influences have intermingled albeit each racial group has distinct languages, dialects and religious-cultural practices. Such a multicultural setting poses language and communicational barriers, and presents a myriad of challenges for the growth and development of music therapy. In addition, music therapy is relatively new and currently there is a lack of local data showing the effectiveness of music therapy to patients in Singapore medical settings.

The purpose of this presentation is to set a platform for music therapists to share and discuss their experience in establishing medical music therapy in a multicultural environment. As there is no free healthcare in Singapore and music therapy is not considered mainstream, issues and challenges related to funding will also be discussed.