



WFMT BUZZ

From the desk of Dr. Melissa Mercadal-Brotons



April 2020

Dear WFMT friends and colleagues,

We are officially three months away from the **2020 World Congress of Music Therapy**. Many of us have already registered and made our travel plans to be in South Africa for this exciting event. Most unfortunately, the increasingly unpredictable nature of the Covid-19 pandemic with its impact on international travel and public events, has forced us to **cancel the 16th World Congress of Music Therapy as an in-person event**.

The Organizing Committee of the congress alongside the WFMT Council is working hard to offer a creative substitute on-line congress event which will feature key aspects of the congress programme. Stay tuned since further details will follow shortly.

In the meantime, we are going to continue our series of interviews with presenters at the 16th World Congress of Music Therapy. I am very pleased to introduce **Dr. Jinah Kim**, who is well known for her clinical work and research in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. She is one of the speakers featured in the spotlight session on **Advancing Research in Music Therapy**.

Finally, we applaud the work of professional associations across the world who are working hard to advise music therapists as we all seek to safeguard our clients, our families and ourselves.

Melissa Mercadal-Brotons, PhD, MT-BC, SMTAE
President WFMT



Jinah Kim:

Jinah Kim, PhD, is a Professor of the Creative Arts Therapy Department at Jeonju University, South Korea.

She has served on national (Journal of Korean Music Therapy, Journal of Human Behavior & Music) and international (Nordic Journal of Music Therapy) journals as either a member of the editorial board, or associate editor. She has worked in the field of child & adolescent psychiatry, rehabilitation, and special clinics. Her research includes early interventions with people diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and child abuse and neglect.

Interview

1. What drew you to the field of music therapy?

It was more of a curiosity for me. I was fascinated by the possibility of using music for the good of others.

2. What are your primary areas of practice and what fascinates you about that area/those areas?

Developmental disorders, especially Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and the field of Child and Adolescent welfare (abuse and neglect), rehabilitation area, and hospice, etc.

I have been curious about the differences and similarities between my clients and myself as I get to know them over time. I also respect the unique personality of each individual I have encountered in my clinical work and clinical trials.

3. What are your areas of research?

Autism Spectrum Disorder, Child abuse & poverty are two main areas of my research interest so far.



4. Please describe in some more detail a study that you are currently involved in.

I am currently involved in conducting a small scale interdisciplinary multicenter Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) study with colleagues in child psychiatry and neuropsychology. This concerns very young children, 2-6 years old, with a diagnosis of ASD who participate in improvisational music therapy. We use behavioral measurements as well as neuroimaging (aMRI, DTI, rsfMRI). It could be said that this is a part of my research trajectory.

5. In this congress you will be presenting as part of the spotlight session on *Innovation in Music Therapy Practice*. Please give us a sense of the uniqueness of your contribution in this area.

My current project is a pragmatic trial looking at the impact of a year of improvisational music therapy (IMT) on young children with ASD. The design itself (once a week intervention for a year, a total of 48 sessions) is one of the most pragmatic designs, resembling what children with ASD usually receive in the "real world". To my knowledge, none of the previous music therapy clinical trials was long enough. This study also employs many different forms of behavioral and physical measurements. Blood samples will be taken to test out DNA markers. Behavioral changes will be compared and explored with neurological changes via neuroimaging. The neuroimages will be taken as pre and post tests for a year of IMT, exploring comprehensive view of brain development and its changes. Since the negative results of the TIMEA publication in JAMA 2017, this study continues to explore other possibilities of establishing specific benefits of music therapy for children with ASD. However, by July 2020, the study will be still ongoing, and I will not have the full data analyzed. But I will have some preliminary results/reports. It is also unique to involve so many different disciplines: music therapists from 5 centers, professors of child psychiatry and neuropsychology from the medical school of Seoul National University Hospital (high profile doctors), and neuroimaging specialists, etc. I am the principal investigator of this study (MANE).

6. What are you looking forward to about attending and what are your expectations of the World Congress of Music Therapy in 2020 in South Africa? (virtual)

COVID-19 has changed the way of living dramatically all around the world, and I cannot think of anyone not affected by this pandemic situation. Before the COVID-19 I expected such diversity and novel experiences. I had imagined over the years about African countries, the amazing nature & wildlife, prehistoric culture which may still be found, and also the fine food and wine in South Africa.

Now, the COVID-19 has changed the way we communicate with others around the world.

I expect the real humanity may blossom under such difficult times, our inner strength and virtue, and who we are in a real sense. Most of all, the benefits of the wired world through the internet will certainly be highlighted.

7. Please complete the following sentence which we will use to encourage others to attend:

Come to the (virtual) World Congress of Music Therapy in 2020 because we are easily connected by the click of fingertips, and there's no border controls and time restriction!

Jinah Kim, PhD

