

Can Music Therapy Improve Mild Cognitive Impairment or Alzheimer's Disease?



Mary Sano, PhD



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Co-Principal Investigators Dr. Mary Sano (Director of the ADRC) and Dr. Joanne Loewy (Founding Director of the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine)

An exciting and unique collaboration is underway between Mount Sinai's ADRC and the team at the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine where we are investigating the use of music therapy interventions among patients with memory problems to improve language as well as memory and thinking. During this time of COVID-19 when many of us are not leaving the house very much, Mount Sinai has also been using the music therapy project as a way of exploring novel "in-home" approaches.

Because the effect of medications to treat memory disorders is modest, there is currently a great interest in life-style interventions to improve memory and thinking and many studies are focusing on cognitive, social, and physical engagement. Music may play a role in all of these, and music therapy has a focus on social and cognitive engagement in particular. Music therapy interventions may include many types of activities such as singing, music appreciation, participating in musical events, and combining meaningful words along with familiar melodies of song. Prior studies have suggested that music therapy and other music activities can benefit mood, relieve stress, improve quality of life and enrich the relationship between caregivers and patients with memory difficulties. Dr. Mary Sano, our ADRC director, and Dr. Joanne Loewy, Director of the Louis Armstrong Department of Music Therapy, are the co-Principal Investigators. Dr. Sano said, "This is an important project that will help us determine whether safe and easy to access interventions like music and other pleasant activities can improve cognition, behavior and functioning in those with Mild Cognitive Impairment or Alzheimer's disease." She added, "We here at the ADRC recognize the

COVID-19 pandemic has upended all our lives. We are particularly excited to have the opportunity with the music therapy project to determine whether we can learn to do things from home.”

To learn more about this study and who is eligible, please call our study coordinator Juliana Gamino at **212-585-4617** or email her at Juliana.Gamino@mssm.edu.

