THE IMPACT OF A FULL-TIME LIVE HARP MUSICIAN ON THE ONCOLOGY FLOORS IN IMPROVING THE PATIENT’S AND CAREGIVER’S WELL-BEING

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Background Post-treatment depression among patients and caregiver burnout is a phenomenon that manifests with stress, fatigue, and exhaustion. It is characterized as a triad of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and decreased self-care related to self or caregiving activities. It’s a common and emerging problem among cancer patients and caregivers. Previous meta-analyses have shown higher suicide rates compared to gender and age-matched individuals in the general population. Music has been known to relieve stress and produce an environment of peace and harmony. Our study aims to study the impact of a full-time live harp player in the hospital in improving patients’ and caregivers’ well-being.

Methods We studied patients’ and caregivers’ responses on the oncology floor to having a full-time live harp player in the hospital. Several aspects were studied, including stress, overthinking, interpersonal relationships, self-care, and fatigue. These responses were analyzed to understand the impact of having a live musician in a hospital setting.

Results Our study shows that having a full-time live musician in the hospital who plays the harp at a different location throughout the day on the oncology floors brings a sense of hope and peace among the patients and caregivers (figure 1). Harp has been known to induce meditation, and its massive presence with the aura of a live musician mitigates to relieve stress. There was an overall decrease in fatigue, with less emotional exhaustion and less depersonalization improving interpersonal relationships and self-care.

Conclusions Adding several new and innovative interventions, such as a full-time live musician or harp player, will likely improve the overall well-being and efficacy of the patients and caregivers. A persistent focus on a supportive and inclusive environment will enhance the trend toward significance that has already been demonstrated. Recognizing caregivers’ burnout protective factors allows us to work on them and prevent their effects. Intervventional and preventative measures should be adapted and adopted, and longitudinal studies on the same topic be conducted for monitoring and evaluation. Implementing this at other hospitals and studying its impact in a controlled environment is imperative in moving towards better emotional outcomes among cancer patients and caregivers in all hospitals across the US.