



Special issue
**Music therapy in Europe:
 Paths of professional development**

in partnership with the
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ITALY

Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The development of music therapy in Italy started midway through the 1970s with its introduction at the National Bologna Conference in 1973. In 1975 the Italian Association of Music Therapy Studies (A.I.S.Mt.) was formed. A few years later a group of experts began to structure and define music therapy in Italy. This work produced the first training course in Assisi (1981). After that many different associations and training courses arose and they created the Italian Confederation of Music Therapy Associations and Courses (Conf.I.A.M.). During this period it was essential to increase contact with important representatives of music therapy in Europe and the USA, who contributed to enriching the wealth of knowledge and theories. This was done through publications, lectures and supervision by Alvin, Benenzon, Bruscia, Bunt, Lecourt, Nordoff and Robbins, Priestley, and Wigram, who came to Italy during this time. At the end of the 1990s four professional associations of music therapists were formed: the Italian Federation of Music Therapy (FIM, 1998), the Italian Association of Professional Music Therapists (AIM 2002), the Italian Association of Register of Music Therapists (AIRem 2003), and the Association Punto di Svolta. These organisations act as a reference for music therapists, providing information regarding music therapy practice, training and events.

IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The process of professional recognition of music therapy in Italy is under way. In January 2013 the Italian government approved Law 4/2013 that recognises the existence of new professions organised in a professional

body, such as music therapy. This means that professionals can be recognised by belonging to a professional association and / or self-regulated and qualified by the Italian Institute of Regulation (UNI) with a technical regulation. After the law's ratification, a UNI working group of professional associations of arts therapies started. During the last two years, this UNI working group has defined the requirements, skills, modes of pursuit and communication to the service-user about professional arts therapists. In particular the UNI technical regulations established training and professional criteria such as: admission to training with a Bachelor's degree and musical credits; training courses with a duration of at least 1200 hours and a professional profile benchmarked at level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This process has led to definitions for the arts therapies professions under a UNI regulation, which will be published in 2015.

A second aspect covered by Law 4/2013 concerns the registration of music therapists to professional associations. The Law has stated that these associations must have a clear code of conduct, which includes: transparency in activities and structure; observation of professional ethics; an appropriate organisational structure and a qualified scientific committee within the association; clear access to an information point for the consumers and monitoring of its members in continuing professional development. Only associations with these characteristics are able to register themselves with the Ministry of Economic Development, as specified under Law 4/2013. This registration for the professional associations that deal with therapeutic disciplines within music therapy can only exist if approved by the Ministry of Health. After many intense discussions with the Directors of the Ministry of Health, AIM has achieved this approval. At the time of writing of this report this process is drawing to an end.

Future perspectives for recognition and approval

Without a doubt, the spirit of collaboration activated between the main professional music therapy associations constitutes a very important foundation for the recognition and legislative approval in Italy. In fact the Italian associations of music therapy are continuing the work with the Italian government to work towards a complete law that will recognise music therapy specifically at a national level.

With reference to clinical and research areas it is important to underline how far music therapy practices are spreading to increasingly varied areas. Furthermore, this increase in numbers corresponds to a similar significant improvement in terms of the quality of music therapy practices. This is confirmed by the currently few, but still significant number and presence of research projects, which have the advancement and improvement of clinical practice and the application of music therapy among their main aims. At this moment Italy is involved in the international Time-A research project: *'Randomised*

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Controlled Trial of Improvisational Music Therapy's Effectiveness for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders' (Stella Maris Centre, Pisa). This pragmatic trial sets out to generate findings that will be applicable to clinical practice. Addressing the issue of dose variation, this study's results will also provide information on the relevance of session frequency for therapeutic outcome.

Other research projects have been undertaken with children and adolescents:

- *'Emotions in Music Listening and Improvisation: A Study in Music Therapy Group Sessions'*: This study has considered the relationship between music and emotions and the reflexive interaction in music therapy in collaboration with the University of Bologna and teaching institutions of Bologna;
- *'New Technologies in Music Therapy with Children: A Pilot Study with the Impro Component of the MIROR Platform. MIROR, Musical Interaction Relying on Reflexion'*, co-funded by the European Community under the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Project Coordinator: Anna Rita Addressi, University of Bologna, Italy. Member of the Advisory and Liaison Board (ALB) of the project: Musicspace Italy Association (annual reports: www.mirrorproject.eu/dissemination_reports.aspx)

In oncology two recent research projects have been designed and started:

- The first one in the paediatric-oncology unit of Bari Hospital on the impact of music therapy on anxiety in children undergoing painful procedures;
- The second one in Bologna, in collaboration with the University of Bologna and some private music therapy associations, on the use of Guided Imagery and Music with cancer survivors (dissemination in preparation).

These research projects, based on practical evidence, constitute a key element for recognition and further legislative approval in Italy.

SELECTED LINKS

- EMTC country information: <http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/italy/>
- Italian Association Music Therapists Register (AIREM): www.airem.it
- Italian Association of Professional Music Therapists (AIM): www.aiemme.it
- Italian Federation Music therapists (FIM): www.musicoterapia.it
- Italian Institution of Regulation (UNI): www.uni.com
- Punto di Svolta Association: www.mutpuntodisvolta.net

SELECTED REFERENCES

Recent publications from Italy

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- Bonfiglioli, L., Zanchi, B., & Ricci Bitti, P. E. (2006). *Emotions in music listening and improvisation: A study in music therapy group sessions*. Workshop at the Consortium of European Researchers on Emotion (CERE), Bertinoro, 9-11 June 2006.
- Centro Musicoterapia Benenzon Italia (2014). *Musica tra neuroscienze, arte e terapia*. Didattica Attiva.
- Cremaschi Trovesi Giulia (2013). *Il grembo materno. La prima orchestra*. Armando Editore
- Raglio, A. (2008). *Musicoterapia e scientificità: Dalla clinica alla ricerca*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Suvini, F., Bonfiglioli, L., & Zanchi, B. (2008). Musical-mente: La musicoterapia in una prospettiva multidisciplinare. *Quaderni acp*, 15(4), 186-187.
- Zanchi, B., Giordano, F., Rutigliano, C., Natile, G., De Leonardis, F., Muggeo, P., Daniele, D., Novielli, C., Arcamone, G., Cecere, M. P., & Santoro, N. (2014). *La musicoterapia In Oncologia Pediatrica. Il Progetto Dominga: Esperienze nei reparti di Oncoematologia Pediatrica del Policlinico di Bari*. Poster at the XXXIX National Congress AIEOP, 24-27 May 2014, Genova, Italy.

Publications that represent past and current approaches and theories from Italy

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- Di Franco G. L., & De Michele R., (a cura di). (1995). *Musicoterapia in Italia. Scuola, handicap, salute mentale*. Idelson Publisher.
- Official Journal of the Italian Republic (2013). Law 4 "Provisions on unregulated professions matter". 154/ vol.22/ 26.01.2013.
- Scardovelli, M., & Ghiozzi, R. (2003). *La musica nel passaggio luminoso. Musicoterapia con malati terminali*. Borla Publisher.