

Music for the Mind Pilot Study



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We conducted an informal pilot test using the MFM program for a group of 40 individuals who were attending a seminar on MFM. About 60% of the participants were already familiar with Ostad Elahi's music and had listened to this music for some years. The remaining individuals were novel listeners with no previous exposure to this music. All participants started the program about the same time although about 10% of the participants started the program with a delay of one to two weeks. The program and listening instructions were presented to participants in a group setting. Participants reported their experience on a weekly basis and at the end of one month program.

The general experience of the group was extremely positive with the majority of the participants reporting improvement in at least two or more of the following areas:

- Hearing a wider spectrum of sounds
- Reduction in overall stress level
- Improvement in energy level and mood
- Understanding and enjoying music more

Here is the list of some more specific comments on how the program has been beneficial as reported by participants:

- Hear background sounds that I have never heard before
- More serene and peaceful. During the day: 2 different people told me that I appeared calmer and less stressed.
- At night, feel the tensions of the day releasing.
- Negative obsessive thoughts that I have been fighting for months and that have caused me severe anxiety has disappeared.
- After the AM track, feel more alert and energetic even with limited sleep
- On the fourth day, started to hear the content of the music - meaning that I heard the musical phrases and notes in a different way and feel the fullness of sound (layers of sound), like there was a chorus singing along with the music.
- After listening: have or remember dreams of things I haven't seen before. Dreams seem to be more vivid and more meaningful and are remembered better.
- Feel like the constant strumming is washing away all the dust and dirt from my mind.
- When the track is beginning to end, I feel that I don't want it to end and that I want to listen more.
- I began to hear birds in my neighborhood. I am usually unaware of soft sounds but I am hearing the birds now.
- Creative solutions appear in my mind; inspirations and answers to questions

Reported Side Effects:

Out of the 40 participants, one person reported that she experienced mild anxiety after listening to the first two tracks on the first day. Later on she realized that she had not followed the instructions correctly and had listened to two tracks back to back by mistake. She started again on the program as instructed and was able to enjoy the listening without any problems. One other participant reported that he had feelings of uneasiness and agitation since he started the MFM listening program. However, despite the initial discomfort he decided to continue the program. No other negative side effects have been reported so far. We highly recommend following listening instructions exactly as presented in the guide book to minimize any possible side effects.

Hearing the feedback from the participants of this pilot group, we are extremely pleased with the results we are getting. However, we should keep in mind that in order to explore the benefits of this program we would need to look at controlled studies looking at pre-post tests in the psychological and cognitive domain.

The music of Ostad Elahi is unlike any music we have heard before. It seems to have a number of properties that may be stimulating the brain and the auditory system in profound ways. The feedback we are getting from listeners is that they are experiencing benefits in a number of psychological and cognitive domains. We are very excited about the possibility of further research to explore the potential therapeutic effects of this music.

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