

19/05/2023

Anxiety Relief with Tibetan Singing Bowl Sound-Based Treatment: A Promising Complementary Approach



A new study conducted with the collaboration of Institut de Neurociències (INc-UAB) researchers demonstrates that the use of Tibetan singing bowls is a promising approach for reducing anxiety and stress responses. These bowls have been used for centuries in meditative ceremonies in Tibet and have a unique relaxing sound.

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Anxiety is a prevalent mental health disorder affecting more than the 7% of the worldwide population. Despite advances in pharmacological treatments and psychotherapy, many patients do not respond adequately to traditional approaches and may experience undesirable side effects. Therefore, innovative and preventive strategies are needed to effectively address anxiety and reduce stress responses.

One promising complementary approach is the use of Tibetan singing bowls, which consist of metal alloys that produce a continuous relaxing sound. It is a traditional technique used for centuries in meditative ceremonies by Tibetan monks, and its unique sound consists of a base tone that merges with a series of overtones. In this study, researchers compare the efficacy of a treatment with Tibetan bowl sounds to another relaxation technique: Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation, in a single treatment session in an adult nonclinical anxious population.

The results of this study, coordinated by Dr. Cristóbal Río-Álamos (Austral University of Chile), show that Tibetan bowl sounds present a higher capacity to induce relaxation, with

greater improvements in self-reported anxiety and physiological measures (improving heart rate variability and inducing changes in brainwave activity). These findings are consistent with previous research that demonstrated the positive effects of Tibetan bowls on distress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and other physiological parameters.

One of the advantages the authors mention is that the Tibetan bowls are easy to use; whereas Jacobson's relaxation technique requires expert direction and an active role by the patient, Tibetan bowls can be easily administered by a trained therapist or even self-administered with pre-recorded sounds. Moreover, Tibetan bowls sound therapy was reported to be more enjoyable and engaging by participants, which may increase treatment adherence and compliance.

The results of this study highlight the promising potential of Tibetan bowls sound-based therapy as a complementary treatment for managing anxiety and improving mental well-being. According to the present research, it offers a non-pharmacological and non-invasive approach, which may be particularly valuable for individuals who do not respond well to pharmacotherapy or as an acute intervention while waiting for conventional interventions.

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