Improving Adolescents' Mental Health Through Contemporary Worship Music: An Interventional Approach

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In recent years, it is estimated that rates of stress, anxiety, and depression have increased by 25%. The increased prevalence of these conditions has been paralleled by an estimated 8% decline in religious service attendance. This interventional approach investigated the effects of religion through songs of worship by developing and administering a novel intervention that might serve as a therapeutic aid in combating stress, anxiety, and depression. Using both secular and Christian lyrics generated by AI along with an instrumental track recorded by this student researcher, two nearly identical songs with disparate lyrics were generated. All participants (n = 62) first filled out the CRSi-14, a validated scale measuring the prominence of five different aspects of religion within one's life, and the DASS-Y, a validated scale measuring symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, before being randomly assigned into a group that participated in the religious intervention (n = 30), and a control group (n = 30) with lyrics devoid of any religious features. Subsequently both groups completed the DASS-Y scale after their respective intervention. Results indicate significant decreases in symptoms of depression ($p < .05$), anxiety ($p < .05$), and stress ($p < .0001$) after exposure to both the religious and secular lyrical interventions; however, a greater decrease in stress was found in the religious experimental group ($d = –1.1862$) compared to the control group ($d = –1.0126$). These findings point to religious music as a substantiated method of stress mitigation, and an effective tool in inhibiting stress in adolescents.

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