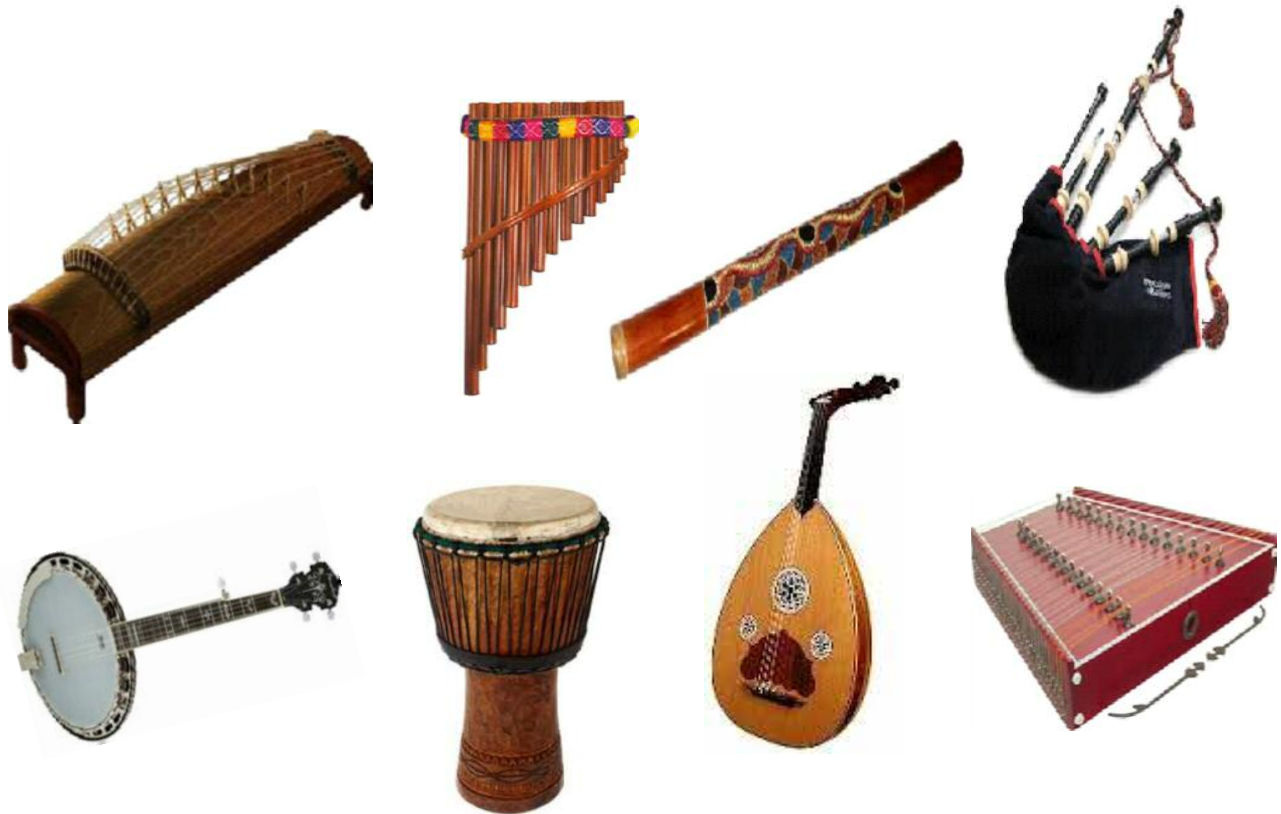


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## **FAMILY-CENTRED MUSIC THERAPY IN THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU): CULTURE(S), CLINICAL PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH IN COLOMBIA**

*Mark Ettenberger, PhD, MA, NICU-MT*

SONO - Centro de Musicoterapia, Hospital Centro Policlínico del Olaya,  
Universidad Nacional de Colombia

### **Paper description**

Preterm birth is a main cause for neonatal mortality and long-term morbidity around the world. The required hospitalization in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) can be a very stressful life event for both the preterm babies and their parents (Carson et al., 2015; Simmons et al., 2010). Music therapy (MT) is known to be beneficial for fostering the self-regulation and development of preterm babies and can help parents to reduce stress and anxiety levels and improve their wellbeing in the NICU (Ettenberger, Rojas Cárdenas, Parker & Odell-Miller, 2016; Ettenberger et al., 2014; Loewy et al. 2013).

Recently, there is a growing interest in the cultural structural factors that underlie how MT is provided in the NICU (Shoemark, 2015). In Colombia, South America, music therapy is an emerging profession and not a commonly used treatment in medical settings or hospitals. Conducting research as well as piloting clinical practice with a variety of populations in the NICU helped to formalize a MT service that is now active in three important hospitals in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. A focus of this paper will lie upon stressing the need to consider the social, cultural, and structural realities when implementing such a service in a new coun-

try and culture. Family structures, social relationships, and of course the music and 'musicking' are all socially and culturally shaped aspects that influence how MT in the NICU can be done, developed, and understood. But also the larger structural frameworks need to be taken into account and both clinical service and research need to be tailored individually to each hospital and NICU.

Hereby, the main pillars of a family-centred MT approach in a NICU in Bogotá, Colombia, will be outlined and examined within the concepts of 'culture-centered' and 'culture-specific' music therapy (Stige, 2002). Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) will be used to make the more hidden aspects of MT in the NICU visible. The results of three recently conducted mixed-methods research studies in this NICU (Beltrán Ardila & Ettenberger, in press; Ettenberger et al., 2016, Ettenberger et al., 2014) will be used to exemplify the potentials and challenges when actively integrating the families to the therapy process.

### **Conclusions**

There is a mayor gap in addressing and making transparent the social, cultural and structural realities when discussing music therapy

in the NICU. However, these realities can have a major influence on the development, implementation and outcomes of clinical practice and research in this area.

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## About the Author

**Mark Ettenberger** is the director of SONO – Centro de Musicoterapia ([www.sono.la](http://www.sono.la)), the coordinator of the music therapy department at the Hospital Centro Policlínico del Olaya and a university lecturer for the M.A. in Music Therapy at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.  
Email: [mark.ettenberger@gmx.at](mailto:mark.ettenberger@gmx.at)