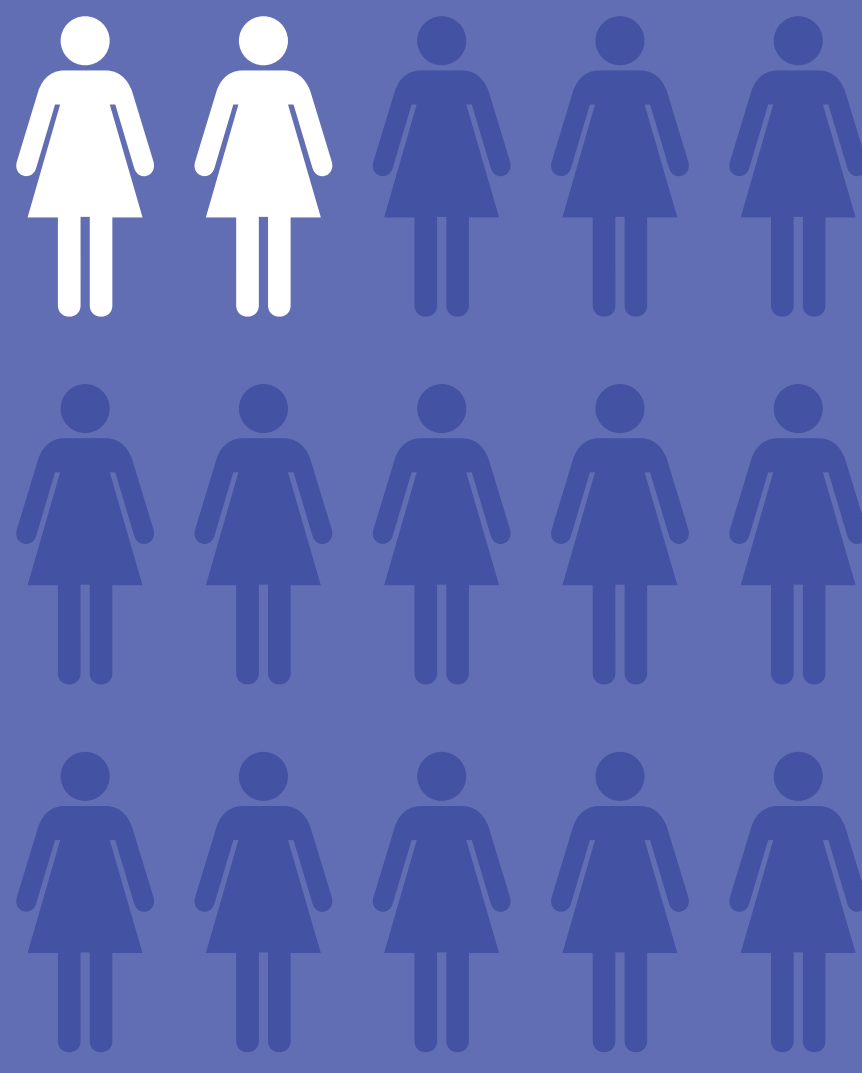


Music and Motherhood

The Impact of Creative Interventions on the Symptoms of Postnatal Depression

1. Why

Postnatal depression (PND) is a growing public health concern in the UK, affecting at least 13% of mothers.



While there has been increasing research into prevention and treatment of PND, there remain some challenges with drugs-based and psychological treatments.

Given that psychosocial factors such as social support have been identified as predictors of PND, it is timely to investigate innovative group psychosocial interventions.

Community activities in general have been seen to support wellbeing. Previous studies have suggested multiple mental health benefits from group singing, and we know that mothers across cultures use singing to help care for and nurture their babies. Music and Motherhood built upon these foundations.

2. How we did it



We developed partnerships with hospitals, children's centres and musicians



We secured ethical approval



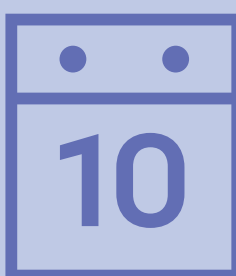
We publicised the programme and screened new mothers for eligibility



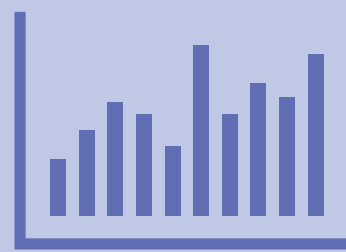
We randomised mothers into singing, play or control (no intervention) groups



Mothers completed our baseline questionnaire and provided a saliva sample



Mothers took part in 10 weeks of activities



Mothers provided more data at weeks 6 and 10



We analysed our data

3. What we found

For women with moderate-severe symptoms of PND, weekly singing led to a significantly faster improvement in their symptoms than play or usual care alone



↓ 35%
PND Symptoms

By week 6, these mothers in the singing group had experienced a decrease of nearly 35% in their symptoms of PND...

...with 67% of them no longer displaying moderate-severe symptoms.

67%
no longer moderate-severe

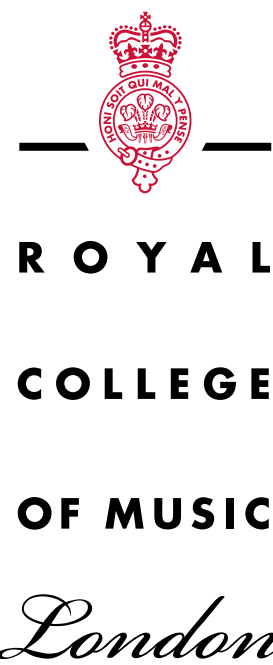


Singing led to greater decreases in stress hormones and greater mother-infant bonding than other social interaction

Emotional responses to singing, specific to being a new mother, emerged as a key mechanism of positive change



Imperial College
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The initial study was funded by Arts Council England with support from CW+ and Dasha Shenkmen, and was a consortium between the Royal College of Music (RCM), Imperial College London, CW+ and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The research team comprised Dr Rosie Perkins, Dr Daisy Fancourt and Sarah Yorke.

Delivery of the project is now being managed by Breathe Arts Health Research, a social enterprise that span out of Guy's and St Thomas' Charity in 2012 specialising in delivering arts interventions within health.