



Bergen, October 2015

**Dear colleagues,**

Having entered into the fourth year of the trial, we are now in an exciting phase: The “interim analysis” based on those 278 participants randomised until spring this year (well, it was autumn on the Southern hemisphere) has been completed. Only the Data Analysis Centre (DAC) and the Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) know the results, and the rest of us are anxiously awaiting the recommendations of the DMC. Will we be able to finish the trial at this point? Or will we be asked to continue recruiting? And what will our collaborators (and the funders) say about that?

Anyway, in our last online meeting (September 9<sup>th</sup>) the impression was that at the moment, several centres are still quite happy recruiting new participants into the study. This was really great to hear and speaks to the enthusiasm of collaborators as well as participants and their families about participating in this study. Participant no. 300 was randomised in June, and we have now 327 participants in the study.

Other TIME-A meetings were held in May (online), in August (in Oslo, connected to the Nordic Music Therapy Congress, where also some very interesting spin-off studies from TIME-A were presented), and in July (between Łucja and the UK team, see the picture below).



Picture taken on 16/07/2015 in London. From left to right: Pavlina Papadopoulou, Amelia Oldfield, Łucja Bieleninik, Belinda Lydon, Stephen Sandford, Laura Bruecker, Grace Watts, Alexandra Georgaki, Claire Grant.

#### **News from the central office – update on roles and responsibilities**

Karin Mössler is now back from her maternity leave. We hear that her transition back into work life was easier than she expected – she even remembered her passwords! The responsibilities in the team are now as follows: General requests, including OC issues and randomisation requests, continue to go to Łucja; UHEADS issues go again to Karin.

We submitted the annual progress report on TIME-A to the Research Council of Norway (RCN) by the end of September. We were very impressed with the number and quality of publications from many collaborators – thanks for bringing these to our attention! The updated popular science summary as submitted to RCN is pasted at the end of this Newsletter.

#### **Upcoming TIME-A meeting and conference in New York: 28-30/10/2015**

The next TIME-A meeting will take place at Rockville Centre, NY, USA from 28-30 October 2015. Christian Gold and Monika Geretsegger (central office), Gustavo Gattino (Brazil), Filippo Muratori and Ferdinando Suvini (Italy), Jinah Kim (Korea), and five music therapists from the UK – Laura Bruecker, Grace Watts, Alexandra Georgaki, Pavlina Papadopoulou, and Belinda Lydon, are planning to come. For those who are unable to attend in person, we will provide the possibility to connect online. The most important part of the internal discussions will concern the DMC recommendations, but we will also plan our contributions to various conferences and work on joint writing projects. When I first suggested to John Carpente to have that meeting at his site in recognition of his excellent recruitment, he thought that a trip to the Alps would be more like a reward to his liking! Unfortunately we couldn't offer that, although we definitely have created quite a data mountain as well. We look forward to learning from this site, learning – once again – from each other, and presenting our work to a broader public in a dedicated one-day conference:

#### **International conference at the Rebecca Centre for Music Therapy: 30/10/2015**

The conference, entitled “*International Perspectives on Improvisational Music Therapy and Autism Spectrum Disorder: Research and Practice*”, will not only showcase TIME-A and its spin-off projects, but will also invite to a broader discussion of music therapy for children on the autism spectrum. Practical themes will be emphasised, and research will be presented with a focus to how it can aid practice development. Ken Aigen, an internationally renowned music therapy scholar, will start the day with a keynote presentation. There will also be a plenary session and 11 concurrent sessions. The complete programme with abstracts can be found here:

<http://www.molloy.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/continuing-education-and-professional-development/careers-and-professional-development-programs/music-therapy/music-therapy-conference>

#### **Upcoming events – save the date**

The 10<sup>th</sup> European Music Therapy Conference will be held in Vienna, Austria 05–09 July 2016 under the auspices of the EMTC. The overall theme of the Congress is “A symphony of dialogues”. The deadline for abstract submissions is 1 November 2015. Gustavo and Ferdinando have volunteered to coordinate a submission for a round table. We can finalise abstracts during the meeting in New York, but drafts should be ready before that meeting. In addition, independent individual presentations by TIME-A project members are of course also highly welcome.

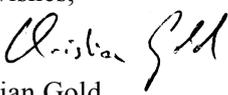
The 11<sup>th</sup> Autism-Europe International Congress will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, 16-18 September 2016 hosted by the National Autistic Society. The overall theme of the congress is “Happy, healthy and empowered”. The deadline for abstract submissions is 31 December 2015.

#### **New TIME-A sub-projects**

Two new sub-projects, one by Ulla Holck and one by Nava Lotan and Cochavit Elefant, have been received and added to the shared dropbox folder. Both are intending to examine in-depth the process of change in music therapy, one focusing on musical and emotional attunement, the other on movement.

Below follow as usual the news from the sites as well as the popular science summary. Enjoy!

Best wishes,

  
Christian Gold

## News from the existing (active) sites



We have now reached the 5 month mark of our 5th and final cohort of participants from Australia, and have closed recruitment. It has been a wonderful experience for myself and my team members - Melina (ADOS assessor), Jo (music therapist and research assistant) and Anna (music therapist). Jo made the journey to Oslo in August to present a beautiful case study from the Australian site at the Nordic Music Therapy Congress, and had the pleasure to meet other members of the team. We look forward now to the analysis phase, and completing our related projects which include the Music in Everyday Life questionnaire data analysis and a further case study. Grace will be presenting an overview of the TIME-A project with case examples at the Australian Music Therapy Conference in September.

**Grace Thompson, University of Melbourne, Australia**



The TIME-A in Brazil is functioning in intensive mode. We are finishing the baseline assessment of 13 participants that will be randomized in September and we will finish the first cohort in October. The total sample size of Brazilian TIME-A will be 25 participants. We included in our team one research assistant who is helping in different logistics tasks of this study. Now, we are preparing the presentation for the "International Perspectives on Improvisational Music Therapy and Autism Spectrum Disorder: Research and Practice" that will be happen during the next TIME-A meeting.

**Gustavo Gattino, Universidade, Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil**



We have now reached the 5th mark with our last cohort of three participants and are waiting to learn whether there are new children eligible to participate in a new cohort.

Our music therapist, Rivky will be leaving on maternity leave and so will our research assistant Romi who is due any day. Our new research assistant, Dana Jacobson returned recently from a one year music therapy training with Joanne Loewy in Beth Israel Hospital in New York and has just delivered her PhD proposal to Aalborg university on the topic of music therapy in neonatal. We have two movement therapists from the university of Haifa who are studying about "Tracking changes in movement profiles of children diagnosed with ASD during Music Therapy treatment". They will be studying movement parameters/patterns by using Laban Movement Analysis and the Kestenbergl Movement Profile during existing TIME-A videos of music therapy sessions. Last but not least, we wish Tali all the luck in finishing writing up her PhD thesis.

During the last year we found out that several of the children in the school in Jerusalem where TIME-A takes place, are not eligible to participate in the study; either because they had been diagnosed with autism at a very young age but no longer qualify or because they would have not have passed the ADI. We performed several phone conversations with parents prior to administrating the ADI and found a large discrepancy between the parents' view of their child in relation to the team working with him. We assume this is due to cultural beliefs and the way a child with autism is perceived in an ultra-religious by his family. As a result of this, the number of participants became more limited than what we had originally hoped for.

**Cochavit Elephant, University of Haifa, Israel**



In Italy is going on an intensive work as far as patient recruitment at the Scientific Institute Stella Maris in Calambrone, Pisa. Until the end of August 2015 we have enrolled forty-nine patients; among these children eight dropped-out after being assigned to the control group condition (6) or music therapy (2). We are starting a quantitative and qualitative microanalysis on Italian music therapy sessions. We are really interested on this topic and we would like to share our ideas with other groups. The June 12th took place the Seminar organized at Stella Maris on improvisation in music therapy during which we had a session to present our TIME-A project to a large and really enthusiastic audience. We are eager to meet the TIME-A team in New York at the end of October. Many thanks John for the excellent work you have done.

**Filippo Muratori and Ferdinando Suvini, IRCCS Fondazione Stella Maris, Italy**



We thought that we had the last child's last ADOS assessment in late August this year, but we are recruiting two more soon. There was a less than optimal occasion on the way since Korean site involved three institutions (Jeonju University, Rudolf Children's Development Center, Family Love Music Therapy Clinic) and 10 professionals cooperating for the TIME-A in Korea. A child in the standard care, was for some complicated reasons marked as drop-out right after the completing the first parent's counseling session, therefore missed out two following counseling sessions. After knowing the situation, we tried to figure out what really happened and to minimize the loss, and paid due apologies to the parents. The therapists, the counselors and myself learned a lot from this experience. On the whole, the data collection and entering the data to the OC and UHEADS are going well, and we are preparing to recruit two more children in our site.

**Jinah Kim, Jeonju University, Korea**



Getting back to work after my maternity leave feels surprisingly uncomplicated, still remembering passwords and routines. I am looking forward to catch up with the TIME-A progress and especially to start the Shared Moments project in October. By that time, TIME-A Norway will have completed the last 12 months assessments and we can finish data collection at our site. We were able to recruit 9 participants and are happy for all positive local network effects that occurred within the music therapy community through the project. A fruitful exchange has also started with one of the involved clinical psychologists which will hopefully lead to further collaboration.

We will also complete the pilot phase of the Shared Moments project by the end of this year. The first set of video data has been analysed using the AQR instrument and we will analyse these data as pilot data before continuing with further video analysis. I would like to thank my co-project leader Wolfgang Schmid, our raters Karin Schumacher, Claudine Calvet, Katharina Vogel, Silke Reimer, Thomas Bergmann, Nathalie Frahn, and Hanna Skrzypek and our research assistant Marko Nouwens for their extensive work with the video data so far.

**Karin Mössler, GAMUT, Uni Research Health, Bergen, Norway**



Greetings from New York! The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy College has completed all treatment sessions as of July and are in the process of testing. We plan administering our final 12 month evaluation on July 2016. In addition, we are preparing and excited to host the upcoming

TIME-A meeting at Molloy College. We are also finalizing our conference program for the October 30 International IMT and ASD symposium. The program is shaping up and looks terrific! Registration is now open (See Rebecca Center for Music Therapy Facebook page for updates and registration information). Looking forward to seeing you in New York very soon!

**John Carpente, Molloy College, Rockville Centre, NY, USA**



We have randomised 28 students to date, 7 are undergoing testing at the moment and we plan a further 5 tests by mid October which should bring us to our target of 40 students.

During the summer we hosted a parent event for parents of children in the project to come together and have some feedback and discussion and we are planning to host several more of these in the autumn.

Some of the students have just passed the 12 month date. Those who were not randomised to treatment in the initial project will still have 12 sessions of music therapy. We are setting this up at the moment.

We continue to share resources and support with the Imperial London and Anglia Ruskin group. Therapists have been having joint supervision with Amelia and this has been really helpful in supporting intervention with our students.

Laura has been successful in a bid for a funded PhD from Anglia Ruskin University Music Therapy Department, Cambridge. This will be related to the study and will be looking at Resilience for students with ASD and their families. This is great news for the team and for local music therapy with students with autism and we wish her well with this.

We are currently discussing participation in the upcoming conferences in 2016 and look forward to meeting some of you all at these events.

**Amelia Oldfield, Órla Casey, Laura Bruecker and Johanna Finnemann, Cambridge Schools, Cambridge, UK**



It has been a busy spring and summer at TIME-A in the East of England. We have started in a new county and parents and participants have been fantastic! A parent celebration was held for parents in our first site in June where they had the opportunity to speak with Alexandra our music therapist and supervisor Amelia, and find out about the study's progression internationally. Future events are planned for our other sites, and we will be going further afield for one final recruitment push in September. Our team members have been very busy promoting music therapy. Music therapist Alexandra Georgaki travelled to Florence to give a paper on the integration of music therapy and speech and language therapy practices in schools, and our research assistant Sarah Faber presented original research findings at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability in London, and has started her PhD at Anglia Ruskin University with a generous grant from the Music Therapy Charity in the UK. Alexandra looks forward to seeing you all in New York.

**Helen Odell-Miller, NIHR funded TIME-A team in the UK –Eastern Region, London, UK**



Everyone has been working hard at the London sites (Central and North West London and Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trusts) to help identify potential participants. By mid-August we had recruited 46 families, which is bringing us close to our target of 50. Two schools have been willing to remain open over the summer holidays and music therapists, Belinda Lydon, Pavlina Papadopoulou and Grace Watts have been busy delivering

sessions. Participant follow-up in the study is very good (88%), which is a testament to the researcher (Lavanya Thana) for building and maintaining relationships with families.

**Amy Claringbold, Central and North West London and Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trusts, London, UK**

### **Popular science summary of TIME-A, updated September 2015 (as submitted to RCN):**

The TIME-A project (2012-2016) aims at investigating the effects of improvisational music therapy in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In 2014, TIME-A researchers published a Cochrane systematic review which provided evidence that music therapy can improve some core problems of children with autism, such as social communication and interaction skills, as well as social adaptation skills and the quality of relationships with parents.

Building onto these findings, TIME-A will provide more specific and more reliable evidence of improvisational music therapy (IMT) as applied internationally today. Long-term effects, relational qualities of IMT, and dose-effect relations have not received enough attention in previous research but are of central interest in TIME-A. By September 2015, more than 300 children with ASD from nine countries worldwide have been recruited and randomised. This is more than in the ten previous studies together and more than in most other studies of interventions for ASD. It shows that IMT is of high interest and feasible across a range of settings and cultures. Including many participants is important to achieve reliable estimates of effects. The developed network between music therapists, other professions, clinical and research institutions has provided an important basis for successful recruitment.

In 2015, TIME-A researchers published a new guideline describing in detail the most important principles of IMT, based on an international consensus. This guideline does not aim to provide a complete manual or even replace the basic training of music therapists; rather, it provides a means for raising the competence level of already qualified music therapists. IMT principles are described as child-centered and relational. They emphasise the child's individual process by giving therapists a guiding focus, but without restricting them too much. This is crucial when working with relational qualities of musical interactions that need to be child-, process-, and context-related. The guideline will help music therapists to work consistently across countries and settings. Results from a treatment fidelity analysis have already shown that different therapists can relate and adhere to the IMT principles.

In addition to examining IMT's effects and describing IMT principles in detail, the project also aims to examine more closely the mechanisms of change (i.e., what makes the therapy effective). TIME-A researchers have developed and applied various assessment tools to look at developmental steps in autism on a musical and relational level. After successful reliability tests, they are now ready for use in projects related to TIME-A. One project examining mechanisms of change, the "Shared Moments" project, has received additional funding from the Research Council and will re-use the data from TIME-A to go beyond the objectives of TIME-A to further understand how and when IMT works. This will also have the potential to predict who can benefit most from IMT, an issue that is important to improve planning and policy-making.

**Note:** A Norwegian version of this summary has been prepared as well and is available on request.