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Music found to decrease blood pressure of catheter test patients

IWAMIZAWA, Hokkaido -- Patients who listen to their favorite music during cardiac catheter tests have lower blood pressure and are able to relax more than those who don't listen to music, a Hokkaido hospital survey has found.

The survey on patients' reactions to music during the tests, in which medical tubes called catheters are inserted into arteries to check their condition, was conducted at Iwamizawa Municipal General Hospital in Hokkaido. Nurses plan to announce the results of the survey at a meeting of the Japanese Circulation Society in Nagoya on March 24.

"When nervous patients take cardiac catheter tests, perhaps they can ask the hospital to play their favorite music," said a nurse in the hospital's cardiovascular department, who headed the survey.

Nurses surveyed 34 patients, measuring their blood pressure when they first entered the examination room, and about 20 minutes later, when the catheters were inserted.

The blood pressure of the 17 patients who listened to enka, classical music or other music they liked dropped by an average of 44 mm Hg (millimeters of mercury). Eight others who listened to nature-related sounds such as the sound of waves or birds chirping had their blood pressure drop by an average of 26 mm Hg.

The blood pressure of the nine patients who didn't listen to any music, however, increased by an average of 6 mm Hg. No major differences were seen in the pulse rates of patients in the three

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groups.

During the tests, patients were asked to rate their level of relaxation on a scale from one to five. The group who listened to their favorite music answered that they were more relaxed compared to those in the other groups.

When patients become tense and their arteries tighten during the tests, it is easy for the catheters to cause damage to the arteries. (Mainichi)

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