

**Effects of Music on Behavior and Physiological Stress Response of Domestic
Cats in a Veterinary Clinic**

A. Hampton* and R. Koh

***Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine, Baton Rouge,
LA, United States of America
ahampton@vetmail.lsu.edu***

Abstract

Objective: Our objective was to determine if feline specific music in veterinary clinical settings would promote lower cat stress scores (CSS), lower mean handling scales (HS), and reduced neutrophil: lymphocyte ratios (NLR) in cats during physical exams.

Methods: Cats were exposed to 1 of 3 auditory stimuli test: silence, classical music, and cat music during 3 physical examinations two weeks apart. CSS were recorded at pre- and post- auditory test and during the exam period. The HS were recorded at the physical exam period, followed by blood drawn for NLR for testing physiologic stress.

Results: Pre-auditory tests showed no difference in CSS between cats listening to silence, classical music, and cat music ($P=0.5647$). CSS for post-auditory tests and exam periods were not significantly different between silence and classical music, but were significantly decreased in cats listening to cat music compared to silence and classical music ($P<0.0001$ and $P=0.0017$ post-auditory respectively; $P<0.0001$ and $P=0.0013$ exam period respectively). HS were no different in cats listening to silence compared to classical music, but were significantly lower in cats listening to cat music compared to silence and classical music ($P=0.0002$ and $P=0.002$ respectively). No difference was found in NLR among all three auditory stimuli tests.

Conclusions and Relevance: Listening to cat specific music prior to and during physical examination was associated with lower stress scores and lower handling scores in cats, but had no effect on the physiological stress responses measured by NLR. We conclude that cat specific music may benefit cats by decreasing the stress levels and increasing the quality of care in veterinary clinical settings.