

What's on Your Playlist?

Retina surgeons have their preferences that include techniques, instrumentation, and the physical OR setting. Having our individual preferences met most likely has an effect on how we perform surgery and may have an effect on the outcomes that we are able to achieve for our patients. What about the music that we listen to during our surgical procedures? Insignificant? Not to me, when my surgical days encompass long hours, many in a dark room peering through a microscope. Music provides for me, as for most surgeons, a backdrop for which to perform intricate, sometimes tedious, procedures.

The effects of background music in the OR on both surgeons and their patients has been the subject of numerous studies in high-impact medical journals, including a study that appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.¹ In this laboratory-controlled study, the cardiac responses, hemodynamic measures, electrodermal autonomic responses, task speed, and accuracy were measured for 50 surgeons who reported routinely listening to music when they performed surgery. The surgeons were randomized to listen to either music they selected themselves, music that was randomly assigned by a machine, and no music at all. Not surprisingly, the surgeons who selected the music themselves performed better in all measures, and those who listened to no music had the poorest responses. Although this is only 1 study among many, it is nonetheless interesting

to see how this group of surgeons reacted to audiostimuli.

At Wills Eye Hospital, the mixes of music being played from surgery room to surgery room are most likely eclectic; here is a sampling of musical artists and songs from my preferred alternative station in Philadelphia:

- Bright Eyes: *First Day of My Life* (smooth maculas, bright eyes)
- Modest Mouse: *Missed the Boat* (hopefully we didn't)
- Colin Hay (from the now-defunct Men at Work): *Waiting for My Real Life to Begin*
- Counting Crows: *Rain King* (all time favorite)
- Bob Schneider: *Captain Kirk* (Austin acoustic artist is good for the soul and surgery)
- Snow Patrol: *Open Your Eyes* (naturally)
- Bob Sinclair: *Love Generation*
- Amos Lee: *What's Been Going On* (Philly boy crooner gets you through anything)
- One Republic: *Secrets* (we're teaching surgical pearls but they're no secrets)
- U2: *Mysterious Ways* (gotta have U2)

So, what's on *your* surgery playlist? I hope you're thoroughly enjoying it—and that you're enjoying your cases also. ■



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1. Allen K, Blascovich J. Effects of music on cardiovascular reactivity among surgeons. *JAMA*. 1994;272:882-884.