



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 518

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Evaluation of art therapy to improve mood and subjective psychological wellbeing of depressed psychogeriatric day-patients in Occupational Therapy Department

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Keywords:

art therapy
psychogeriatric
depressive features
mood
psychological wellbeing

Introduction

Art therapy is widely used as a form of therapeutic treatment in child and adult psychiatry and psychogeriatric for many years. Occupational Therapists (OT) conducted weekly artistic activities to psychogeriatric day-patients with positive feedbacks. It is worthwhile to evaluate the effects of art therapy on Chinese psychogeriatric day-patients. In October, 2012, a one-year project was jointly organized by Occupational Therapy Department of Kwai Chung Hospital and Art in Hospital, a charitable institution aims to serve the community through art.

Objectives

(1) to maintain or improve mood and subjective psychological wellbeing of psychogeriatric day-patients through artistic activities and evaluate the outcome (2) to explore the applicability of artistic activities in local Chinese psychogeriatric day-patients

Methodology

In Phase 1 (October to December, 2012), a course of 6 art therapy 90-minute biweekly sessions were implemented with 2 artist instructors and 1 OT. 10 subjects were recruited. Inclusion criteria were psychogeriatric patients with depressive features and interests in painting using acrylic colours. Qualitative outcome measures: (1) social interactions between participants (2) observations on participants' mood (3) feedbacks from participants. In Phase 2 (January to February, 2013), a course of 6 art therapy 90-minute weekly sessions were implemented with same staffing. 10 subjects were recruited by same inclusion criteria. A "Pre-test" and "Post-test" design was employed. Quantitative outcome measures using paired t-test: (1) Geriatric Depression Scale (2) WHO-Five Well-being Index (3) satisfaction survey. Training content included drawing of daily objects, animals and fruits familiar to participants. Community art exhibition of participants' artwork will be arranged in April, 2013.

Result

In Phase 1, post-treatment evaluation found positive outcomes among participants: improved motivation and sense of achievement in art sessions; significant increase in social interaction, improved active self-expression on their feelings; more mutual appreciations and encouragements; increased interactions with family members. Phase 2 programs are on-going. Statistical data analysis of the outcome measures will be conducted upon completion of the program. Midway evaluation found more significant positive effects on mood, self-confidence, sense of achievement and positive attitude among Chinese psychogeriatric day-patients with depressive features. OT might explore more innovative treatment media to meet the different needs of psychogeriatric patients.