

The Effect of Art Therapy with Clay on Hopelessness Levels Among Neurology Patients

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was performed to determine the effect of art therapy with clay on hopelessness levels of patients under treatment in departments of neurology.

Design: The study was of one group, pre- and posttest design.

Methods: This study was performed on patients who were hospitalized in the neurology departments of a university and a state hospital between February and May 2012 in Turkey. The sample for the study comprised 50 neurology patients with diagnoses of epilepsy (17 patients) and stroke (33 patients). The patients in the study were asked to create objects of clay of any shape they desired. Data for the research were collected with a sociodemographic data form and by using the Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS).

Findings: While BHS scores of neurology patients before clay therapy were found higher compared to the scores after therapy with clay, there was also a statistically significant difference. After clay therapy, BHS scores were lower in women, in married patients, in patients who suffered from a stroke, people who had chronic disease, people without psychological illness, and in the case of children.

Conclusion: The study showed that clay therapy had an impact on the hopelessness levels of neurology patients.

Clinical Relevance: Art therapy with clay may be used for rehabilitation purposes in neurology patients, both in the hospital and at home after discharge.

Keywords: Art therapy; neurologic disease; nursing; rehabilitation.

Introduction

Psychologists have discovered the relaxing effect of art on humans by examining the paintings drawn by people in caves during ancient times and by observing that people have expressed the occurrence of massacres and migrations through art. In time, individuals started to benefit from the healing power of art, which they revealed by thinking creatively in different ways. "Art Therapy" has emerged as a complementary therapy method based on these curative and rehabilitating effects (Dizdar Terwiel, 2010; McMurray, Schwart-Mirman, & Maizel, 2000). Before 1912, studies carried out by European psychiatrists showed that art therapy helped patients to express

their psychological disorders. Art therapy was not being used as a type of psychotherapy within the hospital systems in the 1940s and 1950s. However, it provided an important area for self-expression for patients who did not respond to other methods of psychotherapy (Dizdar Terwiel, 2010; Malchiodi, 2007).

Art therapy can be applied to patients of all ages in all environments. It has a therapeutic effect on people in terms of development, bringing them the benefits of foresight and self-recognition, establishing effective communications, and reconnecting with the outside world by being aware of their impaired internal and external balances (Gokay & Ozalp, 2009; McMurray et al., 2000). Art therapy tries to interpret and describe the basic aspects of observing and creativity at first through art-work (Gussak, 2013). Today, art therapy is classified as analytical therapy, functional art therapy, Gestalt art therapy, psycho-educational art therapy, and medical art therapy (Voltan Acar, 2004). Medical art therapy proved to provide benefits in several areas for patients with physical illness. Differing from other types of therapy, Medical Art Therapy detracts patients from the presence of illness for a while and makes them forget their illness or loss of ability as a result of the creative activities performed during the sessions. Although they participate in this creative activity for a short time, the therapy provides patients with the opportunity to return to normalcy and to their personal powers during that period (Erdem, Karabulutlu, Okanli, & Tan,

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Appendix 1: Beck Hopelessness Scale

Items	Yes	No
1. I look forward to the future with hope and enthusiasm		
2. I might as well give up because there's nothing I can do about making things better for myself		
3. When things are going badly, I am helped by knowing they cannot stay that way forever		
4. I can't imagine what my life would be like in 10 years		
5. I have enough time to accomplish the things I want to do		
6. In the future, I expect to succeed in what concerns me the most		
7. My future seems dark to me		
8. I happen to be particularly lucky, and I expect to get more of the good things in life than the average person		
9. I just can't get the breaks, and there's no reason I will in the future		
10. My past experiences have prepared me well for the future		
11. All I can see ahead of me is unpleasantness rather than pleasantness		
12. I don't expect to get what I really want		
13. When I look ahead to the future, I expect that I will be happier than I am now		
14. Things just don't work out the way I want them to		
15. I have great faith in the future		
16. I never get what I want, so it's foolish to want anything		
17. It's very unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future		
18. The future seems vague and uncertain to me		
19. I can look forward to more good times than bad times		
20. There's no use in really trying to get anything I want because I probably won't get it		