



EVALUATION OF THE IMPACTS OF ARTS-BASED INTERVENTIONS ON THE WELLBEING OF OLDER PEOPLE IN CARE HOMES IN THE UK

Oluwatosin Adesina, MBChB (Ife) MPH (Sheffield)



AIM

To identify the changes observed among residents of care homes who participated in arts intervention and how these changes came about (links between intervention and outcomes)

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative data were obtained from Arts Derbyshire from a previous evaluation of an arts intervention for older people. In the intervention, 24 care homes each received 10 workshops in craft, dance or creative writing. Artists and care workers kept typed reflective diaries of each session. These diaries were analysed in order to identify positive changes in wellbeing for residents and to understand the processes through which these changes came about. Data was interpreted under the overarching themes in an attempt to answer the research question.



DO ARTS ACTIVITIES IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OLDER PEOPLE IN CARE HOMES?

FINDINGS

- Socialising in groups (an opportunity that art interventions afford) reduced loneliness by creating opportunities for shared task, social interactions and company, hence, reduced social isolation.
- Enhanced long term memory and strengthened recall because familiar words and activities triggered memories
- Increased pleasure and enjoyment with certain anxiolytic effects on moods of participants. Euphoria associated with accomplishment of tasks brought the feeling of happiness and pleasure to participants apart from the activities being enjoyable in themselves.
- Increases in the confidence was observed and this can be attributed to social facilitation.
- Increased movement and mobility, helping participants to carry out their subsequent daily activities with a lot more ease.

REFERENCES

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CONCLUSION

•This study builds on the current existing body of knowledge by identifying links between art activities and the outcomes observed and this may be useful in prescribing arts activities to care homes, tailoring it to address the health conditions of residents who reside there.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Arts interventions in care homes need to be well entrenched into the agenda of policy makers who are concerned with social interventions, because they impact positive experiences on participants which significantly improve their wellbeing as backed up by this study.
- In practice, the links identified between arts interventions and the outcomes are useful in helping practising artists of arts activities in older people in tailoring the interventions to meet the specific needs of members of activity groups.
- Further research is required to determine the potential long term outcomes of arts intervention in older people.

BACKGROUND

Awareness of the potential impact of arts interventions on the wellbeing of older people is been recently renewed. There are evidences to show that these activities are useful in strengthening social cohesion and sharing other people’s experiences amongst other things (Cooper &Thomas, 2002; Cohen, 2007).

Participation in arts activities by older people and commitment to engaging them in such activities by the government of the UK and its agencies e.g. the National Health Service (NHS) is however very low. This is despite the growing population of the older people in the UK (Cracknel, 2010) and the attendant comorbidities that pose difficulties to their wellbeing, ranging from social isolation to immobility and dementia.

One reason for the low commitment to the use of arts activities is the rather weak evidences of their impact. The knowledge gap calls for more incisive studies into the potential benefits of art-based intervention.