TITLE: Visual and Literary Art Therapy in Adult Females with Depression: Clinical Evidence and Guidelines

DATE: 31 May 2011

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the clinical evidence regarding the use of art therapy in adult females with depression?

2. What are the evidence based clinical guidelines on the use of art therapy in adult females with depression?

KEY MESSAGE

Evidence suggests that art therapy is effective in reducing depressive symptoms in adult females.

METHODS

A limited literature search was conducted on key resources including PubMed In-Process, The Cochrane Library (2011, Issue 5), University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, Ovid MEDLINE, Ovid PsychINFO, Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused Internet search. No filters were applied to limit the retrieval by study type. Where possible, retrieval was limited to the human population. The search was also limited to English language documents published between January 1, 2006 and May 13, 2011. Internet links were provided, where available.

The summary of findings was prepared from the abstracts of the relevant information. Please note that data contained in abstracts may not always be an accurate reflection of the data contained within the full article.
RESULTS

Rapid Response reports are organized so that the higher quality evidence is presented first. Therefore, health technology assessment reports, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses are presented first. These are followed by randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, and evidence-based guidelines.

Seven randomized controlled trials and four non-randomized studies were identified pertaining to the clinical evidence regarding the use of art therapy for depression. Additional studies of potential interest are provided in the appendix.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, evidence from randomized and non-randomized studies\(^1,3,5,7,8,9\) suggests that art or literary art therapy is generally effective in reducing depressive symptoms in adult women when compared to an unspecified control group. Art or literary art therapy was shown to be comparable to other interventions in reducing depressive symptoms in some studies\(^2,4,10\). One non-randomized study\(^11\) found that, in women abused by intimate partners, changes in depressive symptoms did not reach statistical significance after narrative writing. Additional study details are provided in Table 1. No evidence based clinical guidelines on the use of art therapy in adult females with depression were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Details of included studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author, Date, Study type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gellaitry, 2010, RCT(^1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low, 2010, RCT(^2)</td>
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<td>Thyme, 2009, RCT(^3)</td>
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<td>Thyme, 2007, RCT(^4)</td>
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<td>Author, Date, Study type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monti, 2006, RCT⁵</td>
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<td>Oster, 2006, RCT⁶</td>
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<td>Puig, 2006, RCT⁷</td>
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<td>Hughes, 2011, NRS⁸</td>
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<td>Carneiro, 2010, NRS⁹</td>
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<td>Kallay, 2008, NRS¹⁰</td>
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<td>Holmes, 2007, NRS¹¹</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

MBAT = mindfulness-based art therapy; NRS = non-randomized study; RCT = randomized controlled trial
REFERENCES SUMMARIZED

Health technology assessments
No literature identified.

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
No literature identified.

Randomized controlled trials


Non-randomized studies


Guidelines and recommendations
No literature identified.

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APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION:

Systematic reviews – population not specifically female adults


Randomized controlled trials – population not specifically female adults


Non-randomized studies – population not specifically female adults


Guidelines and Recommendations – population not specifically female adults


Review articles
