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Could art therapy be incorporated in palliative care programs among Asian Americans?

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Statement of the Problem: Studies indicated a high prevalence of depressive symptoms in of patients with advanced illness (Faller 2016; Lloyd-Williams et al., 2008; Ly et al., 2002; Pasquini 2007). Art therapy has shown to have psychosocial benefits. The form of therapy, which uses the creative process of art making to enhance and improve the emotional, mental and physical well-being of individuals of all ages is American Art Therapy. Strategies such as art therapy have been shown to have a positive effect on anxiety management among breast cancer patients (Boehm et al., 2014). This form of therapy helps to increase social support and networking with others and facilitates emotional and creative expressions (Reid and Hartzell, 2013). However, limited studies have examined that the efficacy of art therapy as part of a palliative care within the Asian community.

Methodology: The Chinese Community Health Resource Center has conducted a needs assessment among 7 community members through a focus group utilizing qualitative data collection method. Of 7 participants, 3 were male and 4 were female with an age range of 60-73 years.

Findings: All participants expressed interest in attending an art therapy program to promote healing and reduce anxiety. The types of art therapy participants highlighted were ballroom/line dance, calligraphy, painting, singing, karaoke, and music-making.

Conclusion & Significance: Asian patients are receptive to receive art therapy. However, culturally tailored art therapy should be examined as part of a palliative care program for older Asian Americans.

Biography

Sun has been serving the Chinese community for over 20 years and has devoted her career to improving access to quality healthcare for Asian communities. She is the Executive Director of the Chinese Community Health Resource Center (CCHRC), which she fully developed from its inception. The Center's mission is to build a healthy community through culturally competent health education programs including research and advocacy. Under her leadership, CCHRC is recognized as a leader and principal source of culturally appropriate health education programs within the Chinese community. She also serves on various committees and as a conference speaker at local, national and international levels and lecturer for academic institutions. Her research focus is on exploring and identifying effective methods to deliver health-related messages tailored to Asian communities. For a list of her publications and presentations. In 2012, Dr. Sun founded the Asian Alliance for Health.

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