

# Art improves quality of life in elderly patients living in nursing homes: An observational study

By: Kannan Sharma

## Introduction

Studies suggest that more than 40% of nursing home residents feel the effects of depression. Art has been identified as a solution to improve quality of life. However, studies suggesting that the act of drawing improves quality of life are lacking. A drawing art program was developed to determine if drawing art improves the quality of life (QOL) in nursing-home residents.



## Aims

The aim of this project is identify if art can cause an improved quality life in nursing home residents.

## Methods

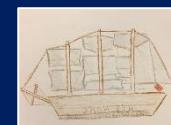
In order to identify the positive consequences of art, an ongoing weekly art program was developed to help the community. An artist visited a nursing home every week and taught residents how to identify depth and dimension of objects, how to use colors appropriately to draw the objects on a paper, and how to draw without the need of a teacher's help. To track students' progress, a survey was created and distributed after classes. The survey asked students to rank changes in coordination after attending the art classes, in feelings of enjoyment and relaxation after the art classes, and in a willingness to come to class. They would rank these changes in 1 to 5 scale: 5 being much improvement, 3 being no change, and 1 being worsening developments.

## Results

After a few weeks, a trend was seen in 5 students (n=5). To the question: "Do you feel happier after art," 40% (n=2) of students responded with a 5, and 60% (n=3) responded with a 4. To the question: "Do you feel more relaxed after art," 40% (n=2) of students responded with a 5, and 60% (n=3) responded with a 4. To the question: "Has your hand coordination improved," 40% (n=2) of students responded with a 4, and 60% (n=3) responded with a 3. To the question, "Do you look forward to art class," 100% (n=5) responded with a 5. This indicates that art leaves these elderly citizens feeling of sense of happiness, relaxation, physical improvement, and purpose.

## Conclusion

This observation indicates that there is a positive correlation between drawing art intervention and improvement in overall health in elderly people. It shows that there is a need for proper research to further address this subject. Lastly, it indicated that nursing homes should implement such simple art programs to help more senior citizens across the country.



## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the St. Joseph Nursing home for allowing me to conduct the art program.