

Celebrate Ability: Structured Art Workshop as a Therapeutic Coping Strategy for Patients with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

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INTRODUCTION

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) affects nearly 20,000 Canadian children. Despite success with traditional medications, managing the “invisible” symptoms like pain, fatigue and psychosocial limitations remain a challenge.

Our objectives were to:

1. Create a Standardized Art Program to assess potential psychosocial benefits in JIA patients
2. Engage the local Hospital, University and general community through the workshops

METHODS

A prospective cohort of children were referred to the Arthritis Workshop from general rheumatology clinic if they:

1. Had a confirmed diagnosis of JIA
2. Were >6 years of age

Full day workshops were led by established artists and focussed primarily on children’s abilities. A reproducible workshop structure included:

- Focused art theme (painting, journaling etc.)
- Technique demonstration by the leading artist
- Individual participant guidance
- Community engagement via hospital staff and parents/sibling volunteers
- Assent/consent for publication of artwork through social media
- Questionnaire completion:
 - Pre-workshop Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory - Communication and Worry subsections (*PedsQL 3.0 Arthritis Module*, a standardized instrument; best score 100, range 0-100).
 - Anonymous participant evaluations at the end of each workshop

Participants were provided with their art pieces at the end of each workshop.

RESULTS

- Nine workshops held Jan 2015 - Nov 2017
- 8-12 participants per session
- A total of 37 participants (76% female) attended at least one workshop
- 98 participants in total
- Median age was 11 years (interquartile range = 8 – 14.5 years)
- Median time from JIA diagnosis to first workshop was 52 months (interquartile range = 13 - 86.5 months)
- Eleven parents/siblings and several hospital staff volunteered for at least one workshop
- Art workshops featured in local newspapers providing Knowledge Translation

Pre-workshop questionnaires:	N=94
Mean PedsQL Worry subscore	83 (range = 8 – 100)
Mean PedsQL Communication subscore	70 (range = 0 – 100)
Post-workshop evaluations:	N=69
Enjoyed workshop	69/69 (100%)
Satisfied with location	66/69 (96%)
Convenient time	63/68 (93%)
Intent to attend another workshop	66/69 (96%)

CONCLUSIONS

- A Standardized Art Program may address limitations in ‘communication’ and ‘worry’ for patients with chronic illness through:
 1. Facilitation of non-verbal communication
 2. Peer engagement and discovery of new skills
- The children’s art provided an engaging way to provide Knowledge Translation through social media

