



Art Therapy and Alzheimer's Disease

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<https://www.supportstore.com/grosgrain-purple-stick-on-awareness-ribbons.html>

<http://cliparting.com/free-paintbrush-clipart-29410/>

Question

In patients with Alzheimer's disease, how does art therapy compared to no art therapy effect the decrease in symptoms of Alzheimer's disease?



<https://blog.thealzheimerssite.greatergood.com/alternative-therapy-approaches/>

Background

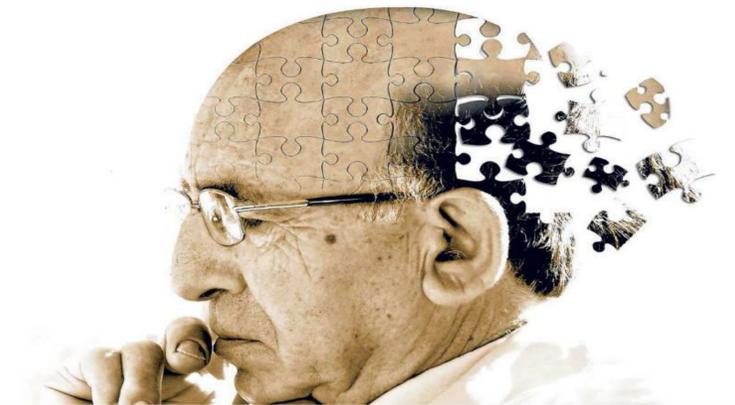
- » Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a neurodegenerative disease that decreases cognitive function.
- » 5.7 million Americans are currently suffering from AD.
- » There is currently no cure for AD; treatment is aimed at symptom management.
- » Symptoms of AD include: memory loss, pain, agitation, depression, anxiety, difficulty problem solving, difficulty performing daily tasks, confusion, and difficulty speaking or writing.
- » Art therapy is the therapeutic use of art such as drawing, painting, collage, and sculpting.

This work is not original. This is an evidence-based practice brief that includes published research conducted by professionals. Guidance was provided by Stephanie Burkholder, professor of NU-307: Evidence-Based Practice Research Methods.

Article	Description	Findings
Can music or painting interventions improve chronic pain, mood, quality of life and cognition in patients with mild Alzheimer's disease by Pongan, et al., 2017.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Level II study with 59 total participants; 28 participants in the painting group » 2 hour weekly art therapy painting sessions for 12 weeks » Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), EuroQol-5 dimensions (EQ-5D), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale used to measure symptoms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Art therapy lead to decreased pain, depression, anxiety » Art therapy improved quality of life and self-esteem.
Evaluating the effectiveness of arts activities for elderly patients with Alzheimer's disease by Pepin, Holley, Moore, and Kosloski, 2014.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Level VI study with 7 active participants » Daily 1 hour art therapy sessions for 2 weeks » Art therapy sessions included painting, collage, and sculpture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Art therapy increased engagement, interest, and pleasure leading to a decrease in agitation, frustration, anxiety, and enhances reality orientation.
Personality modulates the efficacy of art intervention on chronic pain in a population of patients with Alzheimer's disease by Rouch et al., 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Level II study with 50 participants » 2 hour weekly art therapy painting sessions for 12 weeks » Numeric Rating Scale (NRS), Simple Visual Scale (SVS), and the Brief Pain Inventory (BPI) were used to measure chronic pain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Chronic pain was shown to decrease with art therapy » Art therapy decreased chronic pain in NRS, SVS, and BPI scores.
Art therapy for an individual with late stage dementia: A clinical case description by Tucknott-Cohen & Ehresman, 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Level IV study with 1 participant » Daily 45-minute art therapy sessions for 17 weeks » Art therapy sessions included painting and drawing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Art therapy led to a decrease in self-harm and outburst » Art therapy allowed expression of agitation and frustration » An increase in quality of life was noted with art therapy.

Results

- » Three out of four studies showed significant improvement of symptoms for AD.
- » Art therapy has been proven to decrease symptoms of AD including, depression, anxiety, pain, and agitation.
- » Art therapy has been shown to increase quality of life and self-esteem.
- » Cognitive function remained constant throughout all of the reviewed studies.



<https://paulchristomd.com/silent-pain-alzheimers/>

Nursing Implications

- » Art therapy has been shown to decrease symptom prevalence of AD, but is not being utilized as often in North America.
- » Nurses should visit memory care facilities, implementing different types of art therapy and the benefits that derive from it.
- » Nurse managers can advocate for patients to receive art therapy as a non-pharmacological treatment supplemental to their daily pharmacological routine.
- » Nurses can participate in journal clubs to investigate and implement the most updated research, providing the highest quality care for patients with AD.