

Peer Review

Review of: "Provision of creative arts interventions in UK drug and alcohol services: A cross-sectional study"

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Limitations and Areas for Improvement

1. Response Rate and Selection Bias

Although 762 services were invited, only 93 were included in the final analysis. This relatively low response rate increases the risk of selection bias and limits generalizability. The authors should discuss whether responding services differed systematically from non-responding services.

2. Reliance on Provider Perception

The study primarily relies on service-provider opinions regarding effectiveness rather than objective patient-reported outcomes or clinical recovery metrics. This limits conclusions regarding actual therapeutic benefit.

3. Limited Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis is relatively basic. While Pearson correlation was used appropriately, further multivariate analysis could explore potential confounders such as service size, funding level, or staffing expertise.

4. Lack of Standardized Outcome Measures

Creative arts effectiveness is evaluated using informal feedback and provider opinion rather than validated addiction recovery scales or psychological outcome measures. Future studies should incorporate standardized assessment tools.

5. Definition and Standardization of Creative Arts Interventions

The manuscript includes a wide range of activities under the “creative arts” category. Clearer operational definitions and differentiation between recreational activities and structured therapeutic interventions would strengthen scientific clarity.

6. Impact of COVID-19 on Data Interpretation

Although the authors acknowledge pandemic-related disruptions, the potential influence on service availability, staffing, and participation rates could be discussed in greater depth.

Overall Scientific Assessment

The manuscript provides valuable descriptive data regarding the availability and perceived benefits of creative arts interventions in substance use services. While the findings support the integration of holistic treatment strategies, conclusions regarding therapeutic effectiveness remain preliminary due to reliance on subjective reporting and limited statistical depth.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.