

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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This report is a cross-sectional descriptive study of the forms of non-pharmacological creative arts intervention services available from substance use treatment providers in the United Kingdom (UK), conducted during mid-2020. A total of 762 of UK substance use treatment providers were provided brief surveys via the on-line Qualtrics platform, which after several reminders yielded 92 usable surveys detailing the types of creative arts activities offered, the evaluation of those services, the characteristics of the providers of the creative arts activities, and the potential impact on client recovery processes. The report provides a generally useful summary of initial data regarding the types of creative arts services offered in the context of substance use treatment in the UK, but a number of factors are potential limitations of the presentation.

1. The study has a very low response rate, so it is difficult to know to what extent non-response bias limits the generalizability of the findings to a wider selection of substance use treatment providers in the UK.
2. The authors are forthright regarding the low response rate and they provide diagrams to help the reader visualize the steps in determining the numerator and denominator of the response rate. What is less clear is (a) why the response rate is so low and (b) why the plan to reduce non-response bias was not effective in this study.
3. The survey instrument, while designed to be short (11 questions) to facilitate its completion by respondents, has unknown psychometrics, i.e., validity and reliability characteristics. It is unclear if different results would have been obtained if some of the questions were standardized or pre-tested with a focus group.
4. Some of the questions are likely to be biased by the methodology used. For example, questions regarding the impact of creative arts activities on (a) clients' motivation for recovery and (b) rates of recovery essentially ask for the respondents' (most likely a program administrator) to provide a subjective global evaluation of the impact of the creative arts services their site offers on their clients' outcomes. There is likely to be a social desirability effect here due to whom the item was delivered.
5. The conclusions presented in the 'Implications for Service Practice' section of the manuscript appear to go beyond the data collected in the study.
6. The value in the study may be related to questions that are generated by the data, rather than by questions that are answered by the data collected.

