

Review of: "Effect of Clown Therapy on Symptoms and Emotions of Children with Neoplastic Disease: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis"

Delshad M. Shroff¹

¹ Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I appreciate the opportunity to review this article. The authors attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of clown therapy on mood and fatigue levels of children and adolescents with neoplastic disease. This is an important area of focus and a relevant topic, given the level of distress experienced by this population. As such, the reviewers are commended for conducting a systematic review of the literature on this topic. This article is well-written. I am unable to speak to the methodology as I am not an expert in the statistical techniques used. My biggest concern with the current manuscript is the conclusions that the authors draw. For example, the 'summary of findings' at the end of the results section and the first paragraph of the discussion section contradict each other. From my understanding, the systematic review and findings from the 5 included studies do not support the positive effects of clown therapy for hospitalized patients or patients in intensive care. Therefore, I do not agree with how the discussion section is framed as it currently sounds like the authors did find evidence for the efficacy of clown therapy. Some other suggestions/recommendations/things I was curious about include: a) what is the training required to become a clown doctor?, b) how does clown therapy compare with other psychosocial interventions used in such hospital settings?, c) how does the current review differ from prior systematic reviews that the authors report?, d) in some instances, 'him' is used to refer to children and 'he' is used to refer to clown doctors - it would be useful to either use 'him/her' or 'they' so that all genders are represented.