

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

Trudi Aspden¹

¹ University of Auckland

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is a well-written article on a valuable topic, collecting and reporting high-level information, on non-pharmacological interventions offered by 93/762 substance misuse services and groups in the UK, collected via an online questionnaire in 2020, pre-pandemic. This will be useful information for other researchers and stakeholders. The paper includes figures and diagrams used in the paper that are helpful for understanding the research process undertaken. Although the low response rate does limit generalisations, perhaps the landscape has changed anyway since the survey was open. As considerable time and effort was spent creating the list of organisations with contact details, to send the questionnaire to, maybe the survey could be repeated incorporating additional actions and strategies to improve the response rate and a few more targeted validated survey instrument items, perhaps, reflecting on the implications reported in the article, collecting more data about service the providers. I do hope that these findings are used as a starting point to explore this area further, with perhaps qualitative interviews with centre directors, key workers and art practitioners. I found that, after reading this article, there was a lot more that I wanted to know with respect to the purpose that these interventions were introduced and the benefits from the perceptions of service directors, providers and service users, in addition to the well-designed effectiveness trials that the authors call for.

Suggestions for improvements: I agree with the views of previous reviewers. In addition, maybe the title doesn't quite match the article as key worker support and talking therapies were reported on in addition to creative arts. A little more information in the method section of the abstract would also be helpful. I feel that a definition of creative arts would have been useful to include for readers, along with additional detail of the rationale/effects of using them, with references, in the introduction section. An area where additional information would be beneficial is in the questionnaire development section. The article doesn't mention whether the questionnaire items were informed by other instruments or other studies, whether the questionnaire was piloted with anyone or reviewed by an expert in questionnaire design or informed by design principles. Was a particular person or position addressed in the initial e-mail? Section 2.2 could be condensed to allow space for this detail to be included. Looking at question 9, I would also propose that the question response options is not in a Likert scale format. In addition, did you collect data on the role of the person completing the questionnaire? I think this is important when interpreting the responses to questions 9 and 10.