

# **Hospital clinicians' experiences of a work – based group art therapy intervention aimed at reducing burnout: Qualitative findings from a clinical trial.**

**Megan Tjasink**

Background:

Burnout in healthcare workers (HCWs) is a serious and growing global issue. Burnout has a negative impact, not only on individuals, but on healthcare systems. Mental distress such as depression and suicidal ideation is strongly associated with burnout in HCWs. Despite growing concern, there remains unclear evidence in relation to effective therapeutic interventions. Art therapy has shown promise as a means of alleviating symptoms of burnout and psychosocial distress in HCWs. Understanding HCWs' experiences of participating in art therapy is key to the development, evaluation, and implementation of effective and acceptable interventions.

Methods:

A qualitative survey completed after a six – week programme of group art therapy by participants of the CHArt\* study. The survey aims to address the following research questions:

- How do hospital clinicians experience an art therapy group intervention?
- What perceived changes, if any, do participants experience because of the art therapy group intervention?
- What are the barriers and enablers to hospital clinicians' engagement with an art therapy group intervention?

Framework analysis methodology will be applied to the data. Throughout the analytical process, strategies to maximize credibility, criticality, and authenticity will be applied. The NVIVO software package will be used to manage the data.

## Results:

Study participants (n=105) represent a range of healthcare professions, with doctors most represented (41%). Participants are ethnically diverse and drawn from a range of clinical areas such as oncology (18%) and emergency medicine (14%). Initial findings suggest positive change in participants' working and home lives as result of the art therapy intervention. Participants report increased resiliency, improved self-care, feelings of 'whole-ness' and increased patience and kindness towards patients, colleagues and family members. They valued seeing a new dimension to colleagues through creative expression. 94% of respondents found the intervention to be "helpful" or "very helpful", and 94% said art-making supported reflective discussion. Data collection is ongoing and will be complete in February 2024.

\*Art Therapy to Address Hospital Clinician Burnout and Psychosocial Distress: a Randomised Controlled Trial. MREC Number: 22/HRA/5510, ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT05728086

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## **Biography**

**Megan Tjasink** is Clinical Research Fellow, Unit for Social and Community Psychiatry, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, Queen Mary University of London (QMUL). She is also Lead Art Psychotherapist, Cancer and Palliative Services, Barts Health NHS Trust (seconded).

An art therapist at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London since 2005, Megan advocates the unique potential of art therapy in medical settings and drives innovation to develop context-specific, evidence-based art therapy practice and research. Megan is currently testing a group art therapy intervention to mitigate burnout in clinicians based in London hospitals through a

clinical trial: art therapy to address hospital clinician burnout and psychosocial distress: a randomised controlled trial (CHArt).

Megan is in the second year of her PhD with QMUL, holds an MA Art Therapy from the University of Hertfordshire, UK, and a BA in Fine Art from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

### **Recent publications and conference presentations**

Tjasink, M., Keiller, E., Stephens, M., Carr, C. and Priebe, S. (2023). **Art therapy-based interventions to address burnout and psychosocial distress in healthcare workers—a systematic review.** BMC Health Services Research, 23(1).

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-023-09958-8>.

Tjasink, M. and Stevens, P. (2022). **The innovative use of art psychotherapy with NHS clinicians.** In: H. Jury and A. Coles (eds.) *New Territories Technologies and Techniques*. London: Jessica Kingsley, pp.83–103.

2023: **Invited speaker:** Association for Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia and Critical Care (ACTACC), Annual Scientific Meeting, Cambridge, UK. 15 – 16 June.

2023: **Invited speaker and workshop provider:** Art in medicine – a tool for teaching and therapy School of Anaesthesiology, University of Pisa, Italy. 2 May.

2023: **Invited speaker:** Art Psychotherapy Intervention Collaborative (APIC) Inaugural Conference, University of Newcastle, UK. 17 – 18 April.