

Surviving pain creatively

Luova selviytyminen kivun kanssa

Parisa Gazerani, Mimmu Rankanen and Kristin Svendsen

Twenty percent of the population suffer from chronic pain that impacts both their quality of life and their capacity to participate in different activities. Current pharmacological methods are only partially effective, so there is a demand for the application of non-pharmacological methods, including art therapy (Angheluta, & Lee, 2011; Hass-Cohen et al. 2021;2022; Puledda & Shields, 2018; Shella, 2018). Arts therapies are often used especially in recognizing, approaching and treating the emotional and psychosomatic aspects of pain. In facing and surviving the pain, the role of the arts therapies can be expressing the suffering, shaping imaginative exits, and creating change.

Here, we present the development and preliminary results of our ongoing interdisciplinary research project focusing on art therapy for chronic pain. We focus on our qualitative research question that explores how the art of therapeutic mechanisms in treating chronic pain is experienced and described. We are especially interested in how distracting from pain and facing and handling pain are used in different arts therapies.

The literature we are reviewing seems to present a promising role for arts therapies in the improvement of physical and psychosocial well-being in various types of chronic pain. The biopsychosocial model may offer perspectives to enhance understanding of how art therapy may influence chronic pain (Czamanski-Cohen & Weihs, 2016). In this presentation, we present the first qualitative results of our ongoing study related to the arts therapies as distracting or processing experiences of pain. Our ultimate goal is to provide new knowledge of arts therapies to survive chronic pain creatively and to contribute to growing both the research and evidence-based practice of art therapy.

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Kaksikymmentä prosenttia ihmisistä kärsii kroonisesta kivusta, joka vaikuttaa heidän elämänlaatuunsa sekä mahdollisuuksiinsa aktiiviseen osallistumiseen. Tiedetään, että nykyisten lääkehoidollisten menetelmien teho on vain osittaista ja tästä syystä onkin suuri tarve kehittää ja kokeilla kivun hoitoon myös uusia lääkkeettömiä menetelmiä, kuten eri taiteita hyödyntäviä taideterapioita (Angheluta, & Lee, 2011; Hass-Cohen et al. 2021;2022; Puleda & Shields, 2018; Shella, 2018). Kivun hoidossa taideterapioita käytetään usein erityisesti kivun psykosommaattisten sekä tunnetason tekijöiden tunnistamiseen ja hoitamiseen. Taideterapioilla voi myös olla oma erityislaatuinen roolinsa kivun kohtaamisessa, kärsimyksen ilmaisuissa ja siitä selviytymisessä sekä kuvitteellisten ulospääsysten muovaamisessa ja muutoksen luomisessa.

Tässä paperissamme esittelemme kroonisen kivun hoitoon liittyvän ja parhaillaan meneillään olevan tieteidenvälisen tutkimusprojektimme kehitysprosessia sekä alustavia tuloksia. Keskitymme projektimme laadulliseen tutkimuskysymykseen eli siihen, kuinka taideterapeuttisia mekanismeja kroonisen kivun hoidossa kuvataan. Olemme erityisen kiinnostuneita tarkastelemaan sitä, miten huomion suuntaamista pois kivusta tai kivun kohtaamisen ja käsittelyn menetelmiä käytetään eri taideterapioissa.

Kirjallisuuden perusteella taideterapioilla näyttäisi olevan fyysiseen ja psykososiaaliseen hyvinvointiin vaikuttava rooli eri tyyppisten kroonisten kipujen hoidossa. Biopsykososiaalinen malli voi osaltaan tarjota tärkeitä näkökulmia taideterapioiden vaikutusten parempaan ymmärtämiseen suhteessa krooniseen kipuun (Czamanski-Cohen & Weihs, 2016). Tässä esityksessä pohdimme meneillään olevan tutkimuksemme alustavia laadullisia tuloksia liittyen taideterapioihin huomion pois siirtämisen tai kivun kokemuksen prosessoinnin menetelmänä. Kokonaisuudessaan projektimme päämäärä on edesauttaa taideterapioiden tutkimusperustaa ja näyttöön perustuvia käytäntöjä tuottaa uutta tietoa siitä, kuinka taideterapioita voidaan hyödyntää luovana lähestymistapana kroonisen kivun kanssa selviämiseen.

Biography

Parisa Gazerani is a health science researcher, currently acting as a professor affiliated with the Pharmacy program at the Department of Life Sciences and Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Oslo Metropolitan University. She holds a doctorate degree in pharmacy, a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences, and 2-year postdoctoral experience in neuropharmacology. Her research interest falls within the fascinating field of neuroscience. She applies basic and clinical investigations, health technology and innovation, and pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions to provide mechanistic insights and target possibilities for the prevention and treatment of neurological disorders including pain, headaches, neurodegenerative, and other brain disorders. She is also actively involved in patient safety research, user involvement in health research, and an advocate of connecting evidence-based research and practice. Find out more here: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0109-3600>

Mimmu Rankanen is a professor of art therapy at the Department of Art, Design and Drama, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway. She has extensive experience of teaching art therapy at the university level, she has presented her research at many international conferences, published multiple scientific articles and book chapters, and co-authored a book of art therapy. Her doctoral research (2016) focused on how clients experience the process and impacts of art therapy. She is also a state-authorized psychotherapist, psychotherapy educator and supervisor, who has education both in cognitive analytic psychotherapy and art therapy in Finland. Her clinical practice includes long term clinical art therapy with adults suffering from various mental health problems. She led the first Supervisor and Trainer Program of Art Psychotherapy organized by the Association for Art Psychotherapists in Finland and is a scientific head of the professional Group Art Therapy Program at Roiha Institute.

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Kristin Svendsen works as an assistant professor at the Art Therapy master's degree program at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, where she also is a member of the research group: Education and Society. She has Cand Ed/Master's degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Oslo and is a certified Gestalt Psychotherapist from The Norwegian Gestalt

Institute/College and trained art therapist from OsloMet. She is the chair of the Norwegian Association for Art Therapy, with the primary focus on enhancing the field of art therapy in Norway and fostering professional connections among art therapists. She is co-organizing the Nordic Art Therapy Conference scheduled for June 2024.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Svendsen, Kristin Benedicte, Rankanen, Mimmu, Gazerani, Parisa, Richardsen, Kåre Rønn; Lund, Hans (2023). **Growing the art therapy research base together across disciplines**. Paper presentation: EFAT (European Federation of Art Therapy) Conference 2023, "Growing Together".

Rankanen, M., Leinikka, M., Groth, C., Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, P., Mäkelä, M., & Huotilainen, M. (2022). **Physiological measurements and emotional experiences of drawing and clay forming**. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 79, 101899.

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Rankanen, M. (2021). **Embodied, intersubjective and aesthetic view into the process of therapeutic change**. V. Huet & L. Kapitan, (Ed.). *International Advances in Art Therapy Research and Practice: The Emerging Picture* (pp. 141-148). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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Rankanen M. (2019). Paper presentation. International Art Therapy Practice/Research Conference, AATA & BAAT, Queen Mary University of London, UK.