

Forced to be creative? Arts and psychomotor therapeutic interventions, active elements, working mechanisms, and measurement instruments in forensic care

Gedwongen creatief zijn? Vaktherapeutische interventies, werkingsmechanismen en meetinstrumenten in de forensische zorg

Annemarie Abbing, Suzanne Haeyen, Jackie Heijman, Susan van Hooren, Wim Waterink, Hans Wouters

Dark times are evident for persons in forensic settings. As Brecht highlighted, singing, playing, dancing, and creating is possible in these dark times, giving reward, increased self-reflection, critical self-perspective, and hopefulness for the future. These are the foundations of arts- and psychomotor therapies in forensic care. These therapies provide an experiential treatment for psychological suffering and reducing the risk of recidivism among persons in forensic care. Despite positive experience in practice, there remains little research on the effects, active elements, and working mechanisms of these therapies in forensic settings. What are the effects of arts therapies in forensic settings? What are the active elements? And how may these active elements lead to the effects?

The current study pursued three goals:

- 1) to map the effects, active elements, and potential working mechanisms of arts- and psychomotor therapy that are shown in empirical studies
- 2) to describe arts- and psychomotor therapy interventions that seem to be promising in clinical forensic care
- 3) to link promising arts and psychomotor therapy interventions with potential working mechanisms and corresponding outcome measures.

So far, a systematic literature review on effects of arts- and psychomotor therapies, active elements, and potential working mechanisms has been conducted. Furthermore, about 40 promising arts- and psychomotor interventions applied in forensic care have been gathered along with their assumed effects and working mechanisms. About 45 questionnaires, physiological measurements and neuropsychological tests were collected that are valuable to measure effects and appear to be representative of working mechanisms. These outcomes are potentially suitable as they express sufficient reliability and validity. Lastly, outcomes, working mechanisms and interventions from clinical practice and empirical studies have been integrated using focus group discussions by arts- and psychomotor therapists and other clinicians employing the nominal group technique.

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Donkere tijden zijn evident voor patiënten in de forensische zorg. Zoals Brecht benadrukte kan zingen, spelen, dansen en creëren het mogelijk maken om deze donkere tijden meer momenten met beloning te geven, om te zetten naar zelf-reflectie, een kritisch perspectief op jezelf en hoop voor de toekomst. Dit past bij de kerngedachtes van vaktherapie aan patiënten in de forensische zorg. Vaktherapieën bieden een ervaringsgerichte behandeling om te werken aan hun psychisch lijden en het verminderen van het risico op recidive. Er blijven echter aanzienlijke kennislacunes bestaan met betrekking tot de effectiviteit van vaktherapie, de werkzame elementen en werkingsmechanismen. Hoe effectief is vaktherapie in de forensische zorg? Wat is werkzaam? En hoe kunnen de werkzame elementen leiden tot deze effecten? De huidige studie streefde daarom de volgende drie doelen na: 1) het in kaart brengen van de effecten, werkzame elementen en potentiële werkingsmechanismen die beschreven zijn in de literatuur over de verschillende vaktherapieën binnen de forensische zorg, 2) het beschrijven van veelbelovende vaktherapeutische interventies voor forensische zorg op basis van best practices vanuit de forensische praktijk en 3) het koppelen van veelbelovende vaktherapeutische interventies aan potentiële werkingsmechanismen en bijbehorende uitkomstmaten.

Tot nu toe is een systematisch literatuuronderzoek naar effecten, werkzame elementen en mogelijke werkingsmechanismen uitgevoerd en zijn er ongeveer 40 veelbelovende vaktherapeutische interventies uit de forensische zorg verzameld, samen met veronderstelde effecten en hun potentiële werkingsmechanismen. Ongeveer 45 meetinstrumenten, waaronder vragenlijsten, fysiologische metingen en neuropsychologische tests zijn geïdentificeerd om de effecten en werkingsmechanismen te operationaliseren. Deze meetinstrumenten zijn geselecteerd op het beschikken van voldoende betrouwbaarheid en validiteit. Uitkomsten, werkmechanismen en interventies zijn uiteindelijk geïntegreerd met behulp van focusgroep discussies door vaktherapeuten en andere clinici met behulp van de nominale groepstechniek.

Biography

Dr. Annemarie Abbing is a senior researcher/lecturer in art therapy at University of Applied Sciences Leiden, with a special interest in research of mechanisms of change. She obtained her doctoral degree in art therapy for anxiety and holds a small postdoc position at the Open University in The Netherlands, where she studies the effectiveness and mechanisms of change of arts therapies in forensic psychiatric settings.

Dr. Suzanne Haeyen is Professor of the research group Arts & Body-based Therapies in Health Care at HAN University of Applied Sciences. She is co-ordinator of content of the Master programme and art therapist at an expert centre for personality problems. She wrote several publications about arts therapies in personality disorders and contributed to national multidisciplinary guidelines for treatment of personality disorders.

Jackie Heijman is a junior researcher of the research group Arts & Body-based Therapies in Health Care at HAN University of Applied Sciences. She is a visual art therapist and a psychologist in education. She published previously about compassion-focused art therapy, trauma-focused art therapy and collecting and/or constructing art therapy interventions and has co-written several publications on these subjects.

Prof. Dr. Susan van Hooren is Professor in Clinical psychology and head of the Department of Clinical Psychology at the Open University of the Netherland. She supervises several PhD students on effects and working mechanisms of arts therapies and she has more than one hundred research publications in the field of arts therapies.

Dr. Wim Waterink is Associate Professor of General Psychology at the Open University of the Netherland. His research focuses on active elements and working mechanisms of psychotherapies from a theoretical and experimental point of view.

Hans Wouters is a research psychologist and epidemiologist. In the past 15 years he has studied a broad range of topics in the fields of psychiatry and geriatric medicine. He is affiliated to the research group Arts & Body-based Therapies in Health Care at HAN University of Applied Sciences where he employs various quantitative and qualitative research methods to evaluate the effectiveness of arts and psychomotor therapies and their working mechanisms.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Abbing, A., Haeyen, S. (shared first authorship), Nyapati, S., Verboon, P. & van Hooren, S. (2023). **Effectiveness and mechanisms of the arts therapies in forensic psychiatric care. A systematic review, narrative synthesis and meta analysis.** *Frontiers in Psychiatry, section Forensic Psychiatry*. 14:1128252. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2023.1128252

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Haeyen, S. (2022). **Effects of arts and psychomotor therapies in personality disorders. Developing a treatment guideline based on a systematic review using GRADE.** *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 13. Doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2022.878866

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