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Art therapy in patients with Parkinson's disease: a pilot study

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Introduction: Several neuroimaging evidence provided functional and anatomical correlates of the efficacy of Art Therapy (AT) in patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) [1-2]. AT, may be considered as a novel rehabilitation strategy able to improve the cognitive and sensorimotor functions [3]. However, the AT-efficacy on impaired visual perception, a PD-common feature associated with negative motor outcomes, still remains unknown.

Objective: This pilot study aimed to evaluate the impact of AT on visual perception in PD patients, using a neuropsychologic approach.

Methods: Clinical and neuropsychological data were acquired from 12 participants (6 PD patients and 6 age-matched controls). To assess the cognitive performance in all participants, we used a complete neuropsychological battery including: MOCA, TMTA, TMTB, Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure Test, Benton Visual test, FAB, phonemic fluency, and backward digit range; PHQ9, GAD7 and PDQ39 to assess quality of life and MFIS for fatigue. Patients were tested before and after AT (follow-up period). AT-intervention consisted of 13 sessions lasting approximately 90 minutes, once a week, with the exposure to visual art forms and techniques.

Results: A significant cognitive improvement in MOCA test ($P=0,03$), Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure Test ($p=0,05$) and TMTB ($p=0,05$), was found in PD-treated with AT at follow-up evaluation as compared to baseline.

Conclusions: This study improves the knowledge on the efficacy of AT in PD. Our results encourage a new method of rehabilitation suggesting that AT leads to an improvement in visual spatial function that could also lead to motor improvement in Parkinson's disease.

References:

- [1] Cucca A. et al. Complementary Therapies in Medicine 40 (2018) 70–76.
- [2] Cucca A. et al. Parkinsonism and Related Disorders 84 (2021) 148–15.
- [3] Hamedani A.G. et al. Mov. Disord. 35 (9) (2020) 1542–1549.