



# Museum-based creative arts programming is associated with less dementia patient apathy and better caregiver well-being



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## Background:

- Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ADRD) adversely impact personal and professional caregivers
  - General medical health
  - Quality of life
  - Mood
- Cognitive leisure activities are associated with delayed dementia onset
- Effect on dementia outcomes is uncertain
- Art programs have been explored in many neurologic and psychiatric conditions
- Demand for AD art programs in major museums has been rising since 2006
- Existing programs involve a 90-minute session for AD patients and caregivers that including open gallery discussion and/or studio projects such as drawing, painting, collage, or sculpting
- Little formal research involving art and AD care

## Hypothesis:

- Art-centered experiences may improve caregiver burden and well-being

## Aims:

- To study the potential impact of art-centered museum based programs on caregiver burden and patient apathy.

## Methods:

- Design: Pilot study of an observational cohort, drawn from a convenience sample of community elderly
- Subjects: Participants at an art-centered program designed for people with dementia and their caregivers.
- Recruitment performed on-site at several Museums: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and The New-York Historical Society
- Assessments: Surveys administered by phone to caregivers to assess QOL, caregiver burden, self-efficacy, well-being, and patient apathy.

## Results

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

	Caregivers (n=12)	Patients (n=8)
Age	66	74
Median (range)	(46-77)	(66-89)
Female, n (%)	10 (83)	3 (38)
Relationship		
Spouse	7	
Child	3	
Professional	1	--
Friend	1	
Depression, n (%)	5 (42)	1 (13)
Race-Ethnicity		
NHW	6	3
Minority	6	4
Education		
HS/Some College	1	3
College/Grad	11	5
# Museum Visits/Yr, Median (Range)	17 (0-96)	27 (0-96)



## Results:

Table 2. Principal Findings

Domain	Caregiver								Patient
	QOL	Burden	Self-Efficacy	Positive Thinking	Well-Being	Mental Health	Physical Health	Apathy	
Measure	DEMqOL-U-Proxy	Zarit Index	SE Scale	SES sub-domain	WHO-5	SF-8M	SF-8P	Apathy Index	
Score (Good/Bad)	4-16	0-48	0-100	0-100	0-25	0-100	0-100	0-36	
Age	--	--	2.5 (0.46)	1.27 (0.45)	--	--	--	--	
Depression	--	--	--	--	--	--	-7.9 (5.0)	-10.4 (7.4)	
Programs attended in year	--	-0.21 (0.09)	0.29 (0.20)	0.49 (0.20)	0.36 (0.25)	0.15 (0.10)	--	-0.27 (0.12)	

\*Univariate regression models presented,  $\beta$  (SE). All models performed, those with  $p < 0.20$  presented in table. Green boxes:  $p \leq 0.05$ .

\*Example interpretation: For each 5 museum programs attended/year, caregiver burden decreased by 1 point on a scale of 48 (2%).

"[This program] makes my day. It gives me new ways to engage that I can take home. It has been transformative for us. After the touch object session I went home and did the same with objects from her own art collection. After the [engaging the senses] activity in the courtyard, I went home and made a garden with a fountain in her own courtyard." --Caregiver

"Looking at art and listening to the active dialogue saves me from my alone-ness. It is a time for my husband and I to bond and communicate. I feel comfortable sharing with everyone." --Caregiver

"I like visiting the galleries and seeing the pictures. It makes me happier." --Patient

## Discussion:

### Key findings:

- Increased participation in museum based activities over the past year was associated with improved caregiver indices and dementia patient apathy in both quantitative and qualitative findings
- Study was feasible, generalizable, and potentially cost-effective
  - Takes advantage of existent programs likely available in many communities.
- Some psychological stress may be experienced while discussing illness

### Limitations:

- Small sample size
- Cross-sectional study
- Participant bias
  - Most subjects had already been enrolled in available art programs.
  - New slots in available programs are not routinely available.
  - Relatively uniform demographics
    - Gender and education

### Conclusions:

- Association between the frequency or quantity of arts programs attended and AD caregiver burden and apathy warrants further study.
- Bias may influence findings, but these programs could independently impact outcomes explored in the study

### Future directions:

- Randomized Control Trial
- Longitudinal study
- Cost-efficacy of art programs

## References:

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