



The Use of *Art Therapy* for Reducing Self-Injury Behavior: A Systematic Review

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Highlights

- Studies on the effect of art therapy on self-injury behavior is limited.
- We reviewed studies on the use of art therapy for reducing self-injury behavior.
- Art therapy can help to regulate emotion and reduce self-injury behavior.

Abstract

Self-injury behavior is one way for individuals to escape from their problems, but this method tends to be harmful because it is self-defeating. This behavior is referred to as self-injury but this behavior does not have the individual's intention to commit suicide. This behavior occurs in all circles, including adolescents and adults. This paper aims to describe art therapy's effectiveness in reducing self-injury behavior, while the research method uses a systematic literature review method. Journal searches were conducted using databases such as Pubmed, Google scholar, ScienceDirect, NCBI, Crossref, and Scopus using the keywords (“self-injury”) AND (“behavior”) AND (“art therapy”). Inclusion criteria in this research are a) English or Indonesian language journals, b) published in 2011-2022, and c) using quantitative, qualitative, experimental, or other research methods. The results of analysis on the selected articles showed that art therapy intervention can be applied to reduce distress and depression that causes individual to engage in self-injury behavior.

Keywords: Art Therapy; Reducing; Behavior; Self-Injury

INTRODUCTION

Every individual must have had life problems that resulted in the emergence of stressors in his life. Every problem that arises comes from outside or from within the person. The ability to deal with and manage stressors that arise will be different from one individual to another, so various ways are done to reduce the level of stress one has. Including using positive or negative ways. One negative example is committing self-injury or what is often known as self-injury. This behavior is carried out intentionally in certain parts of the body which usually use sharp objects (Rahmadaningtyas & Pratikto, 2020). According to Sutton, self-injury behavior is a coping mechanism or a way to deal with problems that have a negative impact, but can still overcome the psychological problems they have. The behavior of self-injury is one way to deal with extreme stress and can even be said to be another way to survive stress (Guntur et al., 2021).

Self-injurious behavior or often referred to as self-injurious behavior (SIB) and is interpreted as a problem that very often arises in individuals because they cannot cope with all the pressure they feel which are then complained of positively. (Saputra et al., 2019). Self-injury behavior which is often written as non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is very common in all circles and is considered a serious problem (Miller & Smith, 2008). Self-harm behavior exists because it is characterized by repetitive behavior that leads to impulsive things (Oliver et al., 2017). The existence of self-injury behavior occurs because a person has problems in carrying out internally based emotional regulation. This is the cause of self-injury in a person (Saputra et al., 2019). Self-injury occurs because of someone's difficulty in regulating their emotions. Someone who has this tendency tends to have difficulty expressing the emotions that will be conveyed. In another study conducted in Australia, it was even reported that as many as 8.1% with an age range between 10-90 years had done self-injury (Martin et al., 2013). According to Curtis et al (2018), self-injury or self-harm is an activity of torturing yourself by injuring yourself by slicing body parts.

Self-injury behavior in adolescents is caused by feelings of loneliness. This assumption occurs when individuals feel very lonely and most likely have the desire to hurt themselves (Hidayati & Muthia, 2016). Not all individuals intentionally injure themselves to commit suicide, but having the desire to do so is certain. Previous studies have stated that the desire to self-harm has a close relationship with the behavior of wanting to end one's life. Many predict that suicide has an effect on self-injury (Wilson, 2012). Self-harm behavior and suicidal behavior often occur in psychiatric patients in the age range of adolescents. Even though the behavior of the two is very different in terms of intention, self-harm behavior has been shown to be a very important risk factor for attempting to end one's own life (Groschwitz et al., 2015).

Self-injury is behavior that intentionally injures such as slashing, burning or stabbing oneself which causes bleeding, pain or bruising. The factors that might influence the existence of self-injury are psychological stress and pressure that arises on individuals, family and social backgrounds owned by individuals, for example in their social environment they have experienced bullying causing individuals to blame themselves more often as well as triggering factors for injuring behavior. self. Furthermore, thoughts that arise in a person to do self-injury, some individuals have thoughts of self-injury when they are teenagers, and many factors cause this behavior depending on what is the main cause of stress experienced, for example due to pressure in their social environment or a breakup (Zakaria & Theresa, 2020).

The effects of self-injury behavior proposed by Higgins (2014) are that there are long-term impacts with examples such as injuries resulting from cuts, bruises from blows or injuries that result in damage to internal organs. Apart from the physical, there are also psychological impacts that can be obtained from self-injury behavior. Psychologically, you might feel relieved,

but it's different from what you feel physically, who still feel pain for quite a long time. Higgins (2014) also explained that individuals who do self-injury tend to avoid many people, or some will be normal and not afraid of many people. But overall, self-injured individuals cover up what they do so that other individuals don't shun them. In Indonesia, more than a third of the Indonesian population have committed self-injury, this was obtained from 1,018 Indonesians who filled out a survey conducted by YouGov Omnibus. In addition, based on the 2013 violence survey on Indonesian children, it was explained that data on the prevalence of adolescents aged 18-24 years tend to hurt themselves (Nurliana Cipta Apsari & Thesalonika, 2021).

Art therapy is a psychological intervention or psychological therapy by utilizing various media such as art media, creative processes and artistic results to explore feelings, emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, control addictive behavior, develop social behavior, increase reality orientation, increase self-esteem and reduce anxiety (American Art Therapy Association, 2013). Art Therapy is a form of psychological treatment based on experience and has a special position in a treatment especially for children and adolescents because it is a form of treatment that is easily accessible. Traditionally this therapy is used to increase self-esteem, self-awareness, foster emotional resilience and improve social skills (Bosgraaf et al., 2020). Art therapy provides benefits to children and adolescents, having a positive effect on children with trauma or adolescent medical conditions, children and children with disabilities (Cohen-Yatziv & Regev, 2019). One of the therapies that can be used to reduce self-injury is art therapy. Art therapy can help reduce or prevent self-harm. Art therapy has the goal of expressing the emotions felt in the form of pictures or other forms of artwork so that negative emotions can be channeled into more positive emotions. This therapy method can regulate the emotions of each individual so that it has an impact on improving and reducing self-harm behavior on the grounds that when thoughts bring up negative things, these things can be diverted and overflowed with works of art, so that the mind will be calm and carry out self-harm behavior. Art therapy has a function as emotional regulation to control oneself properly (Maulidina & Siswanto, 2020). According to a review in the writings (Heckwolf et al., 2014) art in art therapy has a function as a means of releasing tension that is felt and then can change this tension into something that can be accepted by oneself. The tension in question usually creates impulses and thoughts that lead to ways a person self-destructs and has feelings such as self-injury or a feeling of chaos.

Art therapy is a combination of disciplines between psychology and art which is a medium for solving psychological problems that arise. According to psychologist and therapy expert, Judith Rubin, art therapy is a formula that unites art and therapy. Art therapy is basically a combination of two disciplines, namely art and psychology. Art therapy is an alternative therapy using art media as a media approach, art is a medium for expressing the contents of the heart into a work of art (Christiani et al., 2021). This paper uses art therapy as a medium to reduce self-injury behavior. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that can use art media, art materials, and making works of art to communicate. Art media can be in the form of pencils, dyes, watercolors, clay etc. (Andriani & Satriadarma, 2011). Art therapy is a form of emotional cathartic media with the aim that a person can channel every impulse that causes stress so that self-injury behavior decreases.

METHOD

Study design

This research method uses a literature review which has the notion of a systematic, reproducible and explicit research method in order to be able to identify or evaluate the results of

existing research related to the topic to be studied in order to find empty space for the research being conducted (Rahayu et al., 2016). In addition to the previous understanding of systematic review studies that have been carried out also refer to systematic reviews for psychological research according to Carvalho et al and using PRISMA guidelines. The study that is used as a reference in this writing is using the theme of art therapy, self-injury. Literature sources are based on keywords that have been previously described using scientific data search guidelines via Pubmed, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, NCBI, Crossref and Scopus and stored in the Mendeley software. The article selection process can be seen in Figure 1.

The questions in writing this article have the main core, namely: 1) What is the description of self-injury?, 2) What kind of art therapy interventions can be effective in reducing self-injury?

RESULT

Data analysis

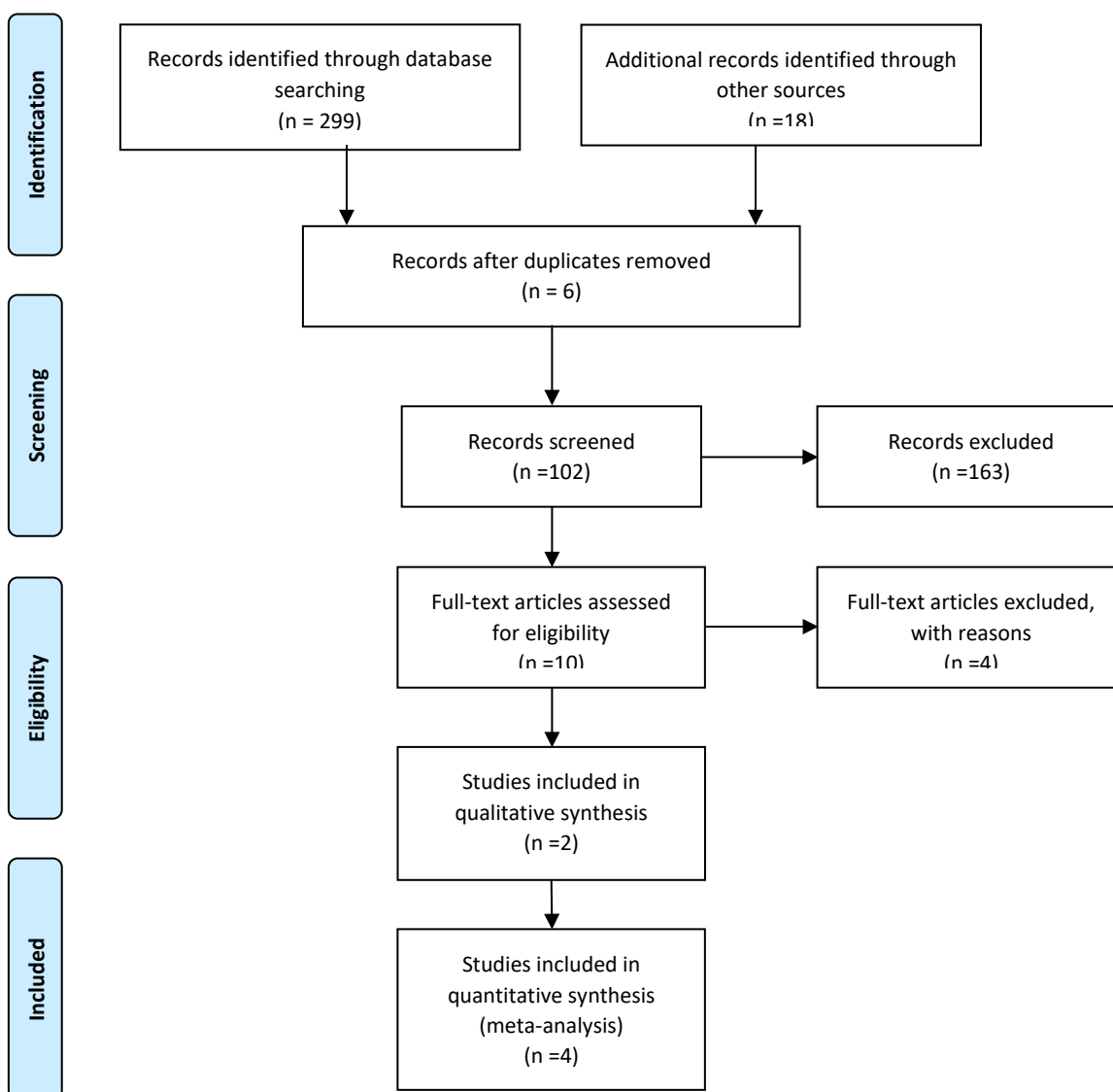


Figure 1. The flowchart of article selection

Figure 1 demonstrate the process of article selection systematically. Initially, the search found 299 articles but only 6 articles that macthed the selection criteria and could be analyzed using PRISMA guideline. The results of the analysis were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.

Review article result

No.	Title (Ref)	Participant	Country	Result
1.	Effect Of Art Therapy and Counseling On Adolescents (Tripathi & Dilawari, 2016)	Adolescents aged 13-18 years with stress disorder.	India	Art therapy combined with counseling therapy for adolescents can overcome social problems, especially stress in adolescents which leads to self-harm behavior.
2.	Application of Art Therapy to Reduce Self-Injurious Behavior in Young Adults Experiencing Psychological Distress (Saputra dkk., 2019)	3 young adult subjects were studied using a single-subject experimental research design and using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research.	Indonesia	Based on the results of interventions, interviews, observations and psychological measurements with the Subjective Unit Distress (SUDS) measuring instrument, The Self-Injury Questionnaire-Treatment Related (SIQ-TR), and the Self-Injury Behavior Scale (SIB) concluded that Art Therapy interventions can reduce self-injury behavior in young adult subjects in research.
3.	Voice Movement Therapy: Evaluation of a Group-Based Expressive Arts Therapy for Nonsuicidal Self-Injury in Young Adults (Martin dkk., 2013)	19 young women with an average age of 16-25 years used group therapy sessions 10 times per week.	Australia	The results of the study showed that there were significant results that could reduce perceived self-injury and depression.
4.	Effects of group art therapy combined with breath meditation on the subjective well-being of depressed and anxious adolescents (Kim dkk., 2014)	24 1st graders of Daegu High School.	Korea Selatan	The results of the study stated that the score showed a significantly higher number in children who were given art therapy with a combination of respiratory therapy. The score results show that the research subjects have more welfare effects and avoid anxiety or depression which result in self-harm.

5.	Interventions to reduce suicidal thoughts and behaviors among people in contact with the criminal justice system: A global systematic review (Carter dkk., 2022)	335 adult men who are currently serving sentences in prison detention	Australia	According to Fazel and Danesh in their research (Carter et al., 2022) states that art intervention programs facilitated by officers in prison cells have been proven to reduce thoughts or behaviors that tend to injure or even commit suicide.
6.	Designing Interactive Media Art Therapy As A Method Emotion Regulation (Maulidina & Siswanto, 2020)	Students who visited the hospital where the research was conducted	Indonesia	With art therapy, it can help regulate individual emotions and avoid self-harm (self-injury behavior).

DISCUSSION

Tripathi & Dilawari (2016) formulated that the existence of art therapy had a good influence on the psychological problems experienced by adolescents in India. Subjects in this study had effects related to lifestyle and physical inactivity, drug abuse, aggression, anger, acts of violence, self-harm, and even suicidal ideation. Art therapy is used to treat the subjects. Art therapy is considered the best way to relieve stress. This therapy provides assistance to someone to be able to understand more deeply about art, can lead to awareness and self-understanding and how to calm down when participating in artistic creativity. Taking the time to participate in artistic creativity can make big changes in the way of life and thinking and can reduce stress. Art therapy is combined with counseling with the first stage, namely the introduction stage between the client and the counselor. Then the second intervention stage is psychological administration. Art therapy techniques, this stage emphasizes goal-oriented sessions. His task is in the form of exploration with the aim of encouraging individuals to release thoughts and conscious control which makes the subjects express as freely and spontaneously as possible. The task is that there is an automatic drawing (scribble technique). In this session, the subject is asked to relax more and start drawing lines freely or making scribbles on paper. The two images are free, at this stage the images are welcome, it's up to the client. Clients can express freely. Next Drawing completion, at this stage the subject is given a piece of paper that already has a few lines and simple shapes on it. These shapes or lines serve as starting points and they should incorporate them into the larger image. Furthermore, the technique of expressing inner feelings or what is defined as a technique created to help clients relate to inner feelings, desires and fantasies by making representations according to their individual desires. Then there is self-perception which aims to move the client to a more complete awareness of personal needs and self-image. The next stage is draw yourself as an animal, where clients are asked to describe themselves as animals freely. Next the client is asked to draw a tree-house-people, given a relaxation session for a few minutes of the session. The last is the session termination stage. In this study, the subjects who participated were teenagers aged 13-18 years with stress disorders and it can be concluded that art therapy can reduce stress on the subject and most importantly discourage self-harm.

Saputra et al (2019) observed a decrease in self-harm behavior in young adults who experience psychological distress after undergoing art therapy. The intervention program consisted of 11 sessions and was carried out for approximately 2 months. Session 1 contains the process of collecting subject data by filling out informed consent interviews and administering the SUDS Self-injury Behavior scale questionnaire and SIQ-TR (pre-test). Session 2 is in the form of an assessment, there are warteg, graphics and HTP tests. Session 3 is in the form of body image, in this session the process of drawing pain in which part of the body is carried out. Session 5 contains ventilation of feelings or what is referred to as drawing 6 forms of emotions that have been felt in the last few days. The aim is to raise awareness about impulses, feelings, needs that are not channeled and the appropriate expression of emotions. Session 6, namely family dynamics issues, or what is called drawing me and my family, aims to see the subject's relationship with family. Session 7, issues of control, draws a situation where the subject feels powerless and draws a situation where the subject can control or control the situation. Session 8, cognitive distortions, drawing mandalas aims to direct the problems experienced and explore solutions. Session 9, enhancement of self-esteem and personal effectiveness, draws a picture of me and the problems I face. Session 10, individuation, draws on the future. The last is session 11, terminating and giving back the SUDS questionnaire, Self-injury behavior scale, and SIQ-TR (Post-test). Art therapy was carried out on 3 young adult subjects and the results showed that this intervention was quite effective in dealing with self-injury caused by distress in each subject. It is known from the process and image results that are in accordance with the goals and process of therapy.

Martin et al (2013) examined 19 young women aged around 16-25 years with NSSI behavior using art therapy in the form of sound movement therapy (VMT). The scales distributed used the emotion regulation scale, the Toronto alexithymia scale, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, the General Health questionnaire scale and the Self-injury Scale. The intervention consisted of 10 group sessions per week with a duration of 2.5 hours. The VMT session consists of: first, greetings and discussion, then there are group warm-up activities, followed by more focused therapy activities, given a break for rest, continued discussion about homework from the previous week and ended by the singing group. The next session used percussion instruments to express each other's emotions. The goal of this therapy is to express and try to make a sound, explore the stories and songs that the subject makes. VMT provides an opportunity for self-exploration. Music in this therapy uses a cappella with the aim of being able to discuss feelings that are owned as a group. The results proved that VMT can reduce the risk of self-injury in subjects.

Kim et al (2014) investigated the effects of group therapy including breathing meditation therapy on the subjective well-being of school children who feel anxious and depressed. The subjects consisted of 24 male students in the first grade of SMA. First do a test with depression and anxiety tests. The subjects were grouped into three, there was group one for the art therapy and meditation group, group two only for art therapy and the control group. Giving a scale using a subjective well-being scale adapted from Campbell 1976. The sessions in therapy are divided into the first session of the initial stage (1-4). This stage is the stage of self-knowledge and exploration which is focused on friendship and self-knowledge. Intermediate stage (5-6) this stage focuses on exploring cognition and rearranging actual thinking. In it there are themes about the feelings that will be conveyed and outlined in the circle pictures and each subject must also express the feelings that have been felt the last few days. Session 7, each subject remembers the past and expresses the most memorable scenes from the subject's childhood. Session 8, the subject is drawing a person in the rain to find out how to deal with the stress you are currently

experiencing. Stage 9, the subject expresses current difficulties and decides to look for specific methods that can help avoid them. The advanced stage (10-13), emphasizes self-recognition that already has a new image and new exploration. In conclusion, art therapy combined with breath meditation can effectively improve the subjective well-being of adolescents who are experiencing depression and anxiety and change behavior that previously tended to be self-injury to become a better person.

Carter et al. (2022) reported art therapy programs practiced on 335 adult men who are still serving time in prison. The subjects who will be given the intervention are separated and facilitated by officers who are referred to as the cultural space. In this cultural space, the subjects practiced Aboriginal art, socialized and also communicated with a representative from the local community. This intervention is practiced to reduce the presence of risk factors for suicide or self-harm behavior from the subject. This risk is identified based on an assessment of risk needs and recorded in the integrated management of offenders. The existence of this program can prevent individuals from committing suicide or self-injury. Maulidina & Siswanto (2022) discussed art therapy interactive media which is used to regulate the subject's emotions. Emotional regulation is very important to make it easier and faster for individuals to solve their own problems. Self-injury or self-harm is usually a way used by some teenagers to solve the problems they face. According to the results of the study, art therapy in meetings and face to face is quite effective in reducing self-injury behavior.

CONCLUSION

Self-injury or many people call it self-harm can happen to anyone, especially among teenagers to adults. Many factors influence the existence of self-injury, one example is the internal factors of his personality, family or external factors of the surrounding environment and cause individuals to experience stress and depression, giving rise to self-injury behavior. Self-harm behavior is very detrimental, because this can have long-term or short-term effects. The long term is a wound that has an imprint or damage to the body. While the short term is detrimental in terms of psychological. Of course, this behavior must be eliminated immediately. It's not easy to get rid of this behavior, but there are alternatives that can be used to reduce this behavior. One example is using art therapy interventions or art therapy. Art Therapy is a psychotherapy method that can treat individuals with depression, reducing the severity of depressive symptoms in individuals. Research on the effect of art therapy and self-injury has also not been widely carried out, so it is hoped that future research will be able to examine this theme and need to be investigated further.

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