Museums on Prescription: Assessing the psychosocial impact of a novel museums-based social prescribing scheme for lonely older adults

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Museums on Prescription

• 3 year AHRC funded research project (2014-2017)
• **Aim:** to investigate the value of museum encounters in social prescribing
• The research connected **socially isolated, vulnerable and lonely older people**, referred through local NHS and Local Authority Adult Social Care services, to partner museums in Central London and Kent.

https://culturehealthresearch.wordpress.com/museums-on-prescription/
Phase 1: Review of social prescribing schemes

- Examined databases, journal articles, reports, grey literature and websites.
- Reviewed over 100 UK schemes from the last 25 years and examples from abroad.
- Explored variety of schemes:
  - Social Enterprise Schemes
  - Volunteering
  - Arts on Prescription
  - Books on Prescription
  - Information Prescriptions or ‘Signposting’
  - Exercise Referral
  - Healthy Living Initiatives
  - Supported Referral
  - Education on Prescription
  - Green Gyms
  - Time Banks
  - Others groups etc.


Phase 2: Evaluation of Museums on Prescription

Participants (N=115)

7 x 10-week courses in partner museums:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Museum</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaney Museum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maidstone Museum</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central St Martins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Museum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL Museums</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Beginning, middle and end of 10 weeks:

- UCL Museum Wellbeing Measure
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
- Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale

3- and 6-month follow ups:

- Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
- Three-item Loneliness Scale (Short UCLA)

https://culturehealthresearch.wordpress.com/ucl-museum-wellbeing-measures-toolkit/
Quantitative analysis

UCL Wellbeing Measure

Pre-post sessions 1, 5 & 10

Psychological wellbeing

Qualitative analysis

- Museum Passports (for participants)
- Facilitator Diaries
- Researcher Diaries
- End of programme participant interviews
- End of programme facilitator interviews
- Follow up interviews at 3, 6 and 12 months (where possible)
- Photos/videos
Participants’ comments

“We needed time to socialise but it was too interesting, didn’t want to take time out to socialise, not just making it a ‘cup of tea’ session”

“The student showed me a particular technique which I loved”

“It was stimulating, it got my brain working”

“It got me out of the house and gave me a boost in the winter months”

“It got me doing different things - things I had never thought about doing before”

“I like to feel the texture of the materials and the objects”

“I was pleased to see a bit of history”

“I felt I learned some new things and ‘re-learned’ some of the things I had forgotten. I am happiest when learning - I felt engaged with the topic”

“It has been a real privilege to have access to experts and expert knowledge”

“Knowledge is useful, it’s something you didn’t know before you went”

Main findings

- Sense of belonging
- Improved quality of life
- Renewed interest in learning
- Acquisition of new skills
- Something to look forward to
- Increased social activity
- Increased creative activity
- Continued visits to museums
- Healthier lifestyle changes

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Museums on Prescription

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Thanks to our funders and partners:

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