
Color Me in: The Effect of Coloring on Anxiety, Stress, and Working Memory in Older Adults

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Abstract:

The aim of the present study was to investigate the potential efficacy of art therapy in alleviating one of the main deficits in mild cognitive impairment (MCI): memory. The present study included mandalas for structured coloring compared and free-drawing as an unstructured coloring activity. To establish cognitive level, participants were classified into groups of MCI or typical cognitive development. The Perceived Stress Scale and the Brief State Trait Anxiety Inventory were also administered to establish pretest and posttest scores on stress and anxiety levels, respectively. Participants' working memory were measured using the Backward Digit Recall. The present study revealed significant improvements in working memory after coloring for older adults with MCI. However, no decreased self-reported anxiety or stress were reported for either MCI group. The results suggest that there is added value of coloring in an older population.

Keywords:

Art therapy, working memory, mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease.