

The Mosaic Project

Using art to improve the experience of Dialysis

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Problem:

Dialysis is often a life saving treatment but brings with it many hours spent attached to a machine. Patients with end stage renal failure suffer loss of physical function and research shows this effects their self confidence, leads to compromised self esteem and increased dependence on the health care system. (McKenzie 1988). Can the use of creative arts during dialysis help to promote a feeling of wellness and an ownership of the renal unit.

Purpose:

The creation of a piece of art by patients, staff and art workers to be displayed permanently on the unit.

The Process

The idea of a mosaic project emerged from informal discussions with a social worker and local artists and we then worked with a Community Arts Development Worker to secure funding from the British Arts Council. We then employed local artists to work with dialysis patients in our satellite unit and our main unit to create 2 beautiful mosaic. The mosaic was created in sections by patients on dialysis, working with the arts workers and then put together and mounted. The Sattelite Units mosaic is placed at the entrance and the main unit's above the scales and can be viewed from the corridor.

Outcome

Evaluation forms were collated and all those involved found it a very positive and rewarding experience.

" I really enjoyed taking part. It broke the monotony and boredom. The finished product is a little bit of all us and so quite special"

The mosaics are now in situ and form a centre piece and main focus of interest at both Renal Units.

Conclusion

The mosaic project with patients on dialysis was a successful collaboration. It gave patients the chance to tap their creative potential and a sense of being able to shape their environment.

Relevance

Recent years have seen an increased interest in the potential of art in medical settings. Improved medicalcare and technology do not seem to deliver quality of life and a sense of well being. Numerous schemes and organization are now dedicated to bringing art and artists into health settings and their positive impact indicates that these initiatives are tackling such issues (Foster.H. 2002). We would now like to take this project further, look for funding and develop an arts programme in all our dialysis units.