“Someone who is willing to bare their soul for the whole world, that is what art is.

Art is the only justification for pain out there” Danny O’Donoghue, The Script.
Abstract

The connection between art and medicine can be a hard link to find at first. Whereas the founder of medicine Hippocrates, can be traced back to 460 BC, art has been around since the beginning of time as a form of documentation. Art and medicine can be compiled together, to engage with patients, making them understand more about the world of medicine. Physicians have increased their understanding of the human body by anatomical drawings done by great artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci and William Hunter. Furthermore medicine in art has gone from portraying sin in the 18th century to mental illness in the 20th century, displaying how medicine is canvassed all around us. Such famous works such as ‘The Scream’ by Edvard Munch and ‘Icarus’ by Matisse are discussed in this review, showing the artist’s influence on portrayal of the medical world. Art is also used as a tool in art therapy and to add colour to bland hospital walls. Art is definitely becoming more prominent in everyday practice. Vast links can be made between art and medicine, looking at how each world influences another. Some are described in this special study module.

Acknowledgement and Thanks

Firstly, I would like to thank Dr O’Neill for helping me with my SSM and co-ordinating meetings to assess my progress. I have thoroughly enjoyed this SSM especially as I was able to write about a subject I am very passionate about. I really enjoy the Healthy Inclusion projects as they offer a fresh perspective to medicine, highlighted in this review.

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Aims

- Learn how medicine and art are related, noting the different links between them.
- Analyse keys artworks, describing and reflecting on their relation to medicine.
- Analyse how art is used in medical practice for the benefit of the patient.

Introduction

Art can be defined as ‘...the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.’ It may seem irrelevant or ambiguous to connect art and medicine together. Whilst most will describe the art of medicine as our communication with the patient, many more links can be established. Below lists the key ways art and medicine are connected:

1. **Anatomy**: early work from artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci and William Hunter shaped a new way of learning about the human body.
2. **Medicine’s influence on art**: medicine throughout time has been depicted in different ways. Firstly as plagues and diseases, then as sin. Art then progressed on to looking at mental illness around the 20th century and now people have embraced medicine and anatomy to make art more visual and dramatic.
3. **Medicine’s influence on the artist**: as a person ages, certain diseases such arthritis and dementia will put stress on an artist’s talent. The work of Matisse was greatly affected by his rheumatism, which lead to his ‘collage’ era.
4. **Artwork illustrated in journals**: the works of JAMA and the BMJ have interesting paintings associated with medicine.
5. **Medicine in everyday practice**: looking at the success of art therapy and how paintings can transform hospital walls is important for patient satisfaction and well-being.

This SSM looks at art works or art practice from each point, establishing why medicine should be looked at from an artistic perspective.

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Method

After talking to fellow students and professors and taking into account prior knowledge, some sources were proposed:

- The artworks of Leonardo da Vinci and other anatomists.
- Works of Edward Munch\(^7\) and Van Gogh\(^8\) show art in scary forms and portray their impression of mental illness.
- The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)\(^9\) has illustrative covers of paintings that they have chosen. The British Medical Journal (BMJ) also contains artworks and striking covers that draw in the attention of readers.

It was decided to look at a number of artworks from different eras, describing how each of them relates to medicine. Some artworks were known about from prior education. JAMA\(^9\), The BMJ\(^10\) and MyAthens\(^11\) search engines were used to find other pieces. Inserted in the search engine was “art and medicine” which gave good and relevant results. The following art was chosen:

1. The Vitruvian Man by Leonardo Da Vinci\(^12\)
2. William Hunter’s Anatomy of the Gravid Uterus\(^13\)
3. Skull with a burning cigarette by Van Gogh\(^14\)
4. Home is where the heart is by Fauna Graphic and Rocket01, a street art piece\(^15\)
5. The Scream by Edvard Munch\(^16\)
6. Icarus by Matisse\(^5\)
7. The Art of JAMA: 'The Cover' Collected\(^17\)

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\(^7\) Bennett D. 2nd Year Medical Student. Personal Communication. 23 April 2012
\(^8\) O’Neill J. SSM Convenor. Personal Communication. 23 April 2012
\(^15\) Street Anatomy. Home is where the heart is. http://streetanatomy.com/2012/04/29/home-is-where-the-heart-is-3/(Accessed 04 May 2012)
8. A BMJ article showing a surgeon as an Ox - Orthopaedic surgeons: as strong as an ox and almost twice as clever? Multicentre prospective comparative study\textsuperscript{18}

**Background and Discussion**

**Anatomy**

This picture is one of Da Vinci’s most famous anatomical drawings, sometimes known as the Canon of Proportions\textsuperscript{12}. This drawing is keen to represent the symmetrical and mathematical pattern of the human body. Da Vinci’s influence comes from the works of Vitruvius, a Roman architect who described his temples in similar fashion to what the Vitruvian Man looks like\textsuperscript{19}. The man is portrayed in two ways, both the legs and arms stretched out as far as possible, or the limbs ninety degrees to each other. It is also noticed that the outstretched legs form an equilateral triangle; illustrating the exact proportions of our human body. Vitruvius describes the shifting of ‘centres’ of gravity or magnitude. Da Vinci spent much of his time trying to find the link between man and nature. With this accurate drawing, Da Vinci was making man’s association with the natural world, and how proportion is marked in every walk of life\textsuperscript{10}. He also faced another problem with the Vitruvian man. It was shown that square and the circle were to be of the same area; however Da Vinci never measured this.


exactly. This example of genius mathematics showed Da Vinci’s intelligence beyond other mathematicians\textsuperscript{20}. Da Vinci set out to show the mathematics of the human form, one that even though based on the grounds of science, is artistic and beautiful. Before Da Vinci’s time, anatomy was only written down and looked at topographically – based on the divisions and regions of the body instead of looking at the human frame as a whole\textsuperscript{21}. Da Vinci was the first to publish anatomy drawings and discover the Golden Ratio about the body, one that relates to every human form despite their size. He was a pioneer in drawing exact representations of the human form. A lot of his work was based on dissection of dead bodies. Whilst this was vital for his understanding of anatomy, it was illegal and broke many laws. Da Vinci was able to study the female form and the workings of the heart and muscle groups, providing accurate drawings that are unsurpassed even today\textsuperscript{21}.

William Hunter’s illustrative representation of the baby in its womb paved the way for understanding obstetrics. This is the most famous drawing from a collection of over four hundred anatomical sketches, found in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. The work was able to be carried out on a woman who died suddenly, very near to the end of her pregnancy\textsuperscript{13}. Hunter believed that ‘Anatomy is the only solid foundation of medicine; it is to the physician and surgeon what geometry is to the astronomer. It discovers and ascertains the truth, overturns superstition and vulgar error ...\textsuperscript{22}.

In his study of the gravid uterus, William Hunter set right many misconceptions about pregnancy. It was previously believed the decidua was part of the ovum. Via his dissection he could establish that it was in fact part of the uterus. He also came up with the description of spiral arteries in the uterus, and found that the spiral veins had no valves. These

\textbf{Figure 2 – Anatomy of the Gravid Uterus (1751) by William Hunter\textsuperscript{13}}

\textsuperscript{22} Peter Munn. Dr William Hunter (1718–83) and the gravid uterus. http://fn.bmj.com/content/80/1/F76.long (Accessed 06 May 2012)
key points are vital in our understanding of obstetrics today. William Hunter was also the founder in understanding circulation between the foetus and placenta. Previously the mother’s and foetus’s circulation were seen as similar. Through careful experimentation, Hunter was able to follow the blood supply of the placenta and uterus, making out the difference. He also discovered the fetal openings such as the foramen ovale, the ductus venosus and ductus arteriosus. Like Da Vinci, Hunter also believed strongly in the course of nature, and how it affected child birth. His comments on labour include ‘in most cases (in managing labour) though, I pretend to be doing something yet I do very little for them...’

This thought is influenced by the observation that babies put themselves into a vertex position before birth, a task not guided by the physician. The body’s ability to adapt to a certain circumstance even before the first breaths of life embodies the fascination of the human system, and how much conscious control we do not have over ourselves. Through anatomy and dissection, this fascination was documented and helps in delivery today.

Medicine’s influence on art

Van Gogh enrolled in an anatomy drawing class and produced this sinister painting. It has quite a ghostly scary appearance to it. Unlike Da Vinci, the painting is more emotional than exact. He has marked specific anatomical features, such as the sutures on the skull and the coracoid process of the scapula, showing his development in anatomy drawing, a success to someone who had not drawn the human figure before. During the 19th century smoking was a fashion; it was only until the late 20th century that detrimental effects of smoking were established. Van Gogh was seen as person with many health problems such as epilepsy, bipolar disorder and Menieres disease. He himself was a smoker and a heavy drinker.

Figure 3 - Skull with a burning cigarette (1885) by Van Gogh

Maybe in his manic depressive stage, smoking gave him this feeling of death and suicide, shown in this picture. Some say that the painting was a joke, mocking academic practice. During the 20th century, mental illness was quite topical, as seen with Edward Munch’s ‘Scream’ too. Artists would depict plagues and endemics, this is what people were really were concerned about. However from the 19th to the 20th century, we can see the change from community concern to self concern in many artists’ works. In medicine there is a good balance between public health and that of the patient; therefore artwork is not as similar and constrained as it was before. Ultimately art moves along with the concerns of our population.

When considering modern art, pictures are a lot more vibrant. When looking on streetanatomy.com, a lot of creative studies were found. Art now ranges from sculptures of organs and limbs, to eye catching collages of the human body. Now that the emphasis has turned to acrylics and modern paint, and using new mediums for art, medicine can be reached to a wider audience. The appealing artwork “Home is where the heart is” uses anatomy to bring in a key message. The work of Fauna Graphic also has a philanthropic nature. They host workshops for younger generations to paint murals such as this one. It really has a positive impact on people’s lives, especially as the end product is so aesthetically pleasing. The change from drawing specific anatomy in Vitruvius’s time, to now using it as an emotional tool in this picture, shows how health is portrayed in one’s life. This picture shows a sense of security, of being at home, keeping us happy and therefore healthy. Now in this modern day, well being and positive attitude has more of an emphasis than maybe medical treatment. Art of the modern age represents this.

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The Scream is one part of a series of four paintings carried out in various media. This picture is clustered with double meanings, based around the ideas of fear, mental illness and personality traits. The contrast in colours, from the red oranges to the blues and blacks shows a separation of life. The red orange evokes a feeling of warmth, but as it is so far away from “the Scream”, there is a feeling of detachment there, of never reaching that security. Because we are focused in on the person, we see a self-centred quality, egotistical even, in this painting. Mental and psychiatric disorders are often displayed with this sense of detachment, and this feeling of loneliness. Edvard Munch has tried hard to put across the despair and confusion in this person’s face. The face has also been compared to that of a Peruvian mummy, an inspiration seen by Munch during his time in Paris. The creature is dead, strange and sexless; showing its sense of non-belonging. In the background, you can faintly see two people and a boat. The people represent misery like the Scream, and the boat represents Dracula’s vessel. It implies that Munch sees no happiness in anyone’s life, that there is never a hope for anyone. The scene has been associated with a road overlooking Oslo, near a hill of Ekeburg. During the time of the painting, Munch’s sister was in a mental asylum here, suffering from manic depression. Munch also had a tainted youth. He writes in his diary “The angels of fear, sorrow and death stood by my side since the day I was born.” This depressed attitude mimics his paintings, a sense of sadness sprayed

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over the canvas. Art is used a sense of relief for many people. Whether suffering from an illness, or being consumed by grief, art can give that outlet to show what someone’s feeling. That is why when therapists use art in psychiatric conditions; it is a great tool in learning about how a person feels. The Scream by Edvard Munch was sold for a massive seventy four million pounds, one of the highest bids ever for a painting. This painting has inspired film references, therapy industries and even retail products16. It seems that everyone relates to Munch’s feeling of anxiety and breakdown. Maybe then his interpretation of men in the foreground, so called ordinary working people, does show some truth.

Icarus refers to a craftsman represented in Greek mythology. The story goes that Icarus was trying to escape from Crete, and he was given wings constructed by his father. He was told to not fly too close to the sun but did nonetheless; leading him to fall into the sea and drown. Matisse is representing Icarus’s reach for the stars. The heart is displayed by a red point. Matisse explains if this point is eliminated then it will leave a body without direction5. He believes that the power of heart will allow a man to reach his desires, such as ones of Icarus. It used to be of popular belief that the heart used to control the actions of the body, echoed in a lot of artists’ work. Icarus is part of a collection of Matisse’s work called ‘Jazz’. Matisse started these paintings in his late seventies due to his decreasing poor health when he developed rheumatoid arthritis. The pictures are quite vibrant and simple, mimicking works of the theatre and the circus. He has only used contemporary colours, which is a contrast to all the shading that earlier artists now use. This style is more consistent with modern day work, where vibrant art is more favoured than dark paintings. Matisse’s Icarus is regarded as one of his famous works and shows how the work of an artist can still go on despite damaging frailty. Due to ageing, our body shuts down. Our renal function decreases, we cannot take certain medication and we start to get confused and
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anxious more often. Matisse is a great example of someone who dealt with the natural process of ageing and adapted his art to it, a true inspiration. Not only can art portray our emotion, but it can give us motivation to get over our illnesses and even embrace the natural course of life.

The Art of JAMA: 'The Cover' Collected

The Journal of American Medical Association is a prime example of why art melds well with medicine. Each cover contains a historical painting which is then discussed on the inside front page. The book The Art of JAMA: 'The Cover' Collected is a collection of covers from the past 40 years, one owned by many JAMA lovers. The article about the book highlights why art is important in our busy medical lives. The introduction of art covers began in 1964 by an M.Therese Southgate MD. She believes that “Medicine, especially as it is reflected in medical journals, is so heavily scientific that the patient often becomes "a minuscule part of the process," she reflects."Devoting a page or so to art is a way of saying that there are human values that need to be preserved in medicine". The article highlights the impact art has on a physician’s life. The art offers a break and sense of enjoyment from their hectic schedule and creates healthy topics of discussion. One cover that was highlighted was “The Cover without Art”, which was part of a program that emphasized the lives of artists who had been taken away by HIV/AIDs. A Day without Art is organised every year by an agency called Visual AIDs who works with organisations across the world to promote the growing disease. Exhibitions, videos and talks were set up to build awareness and it makes a huge impact every year. The extent to what we know about HIV has grown considerably since 1989, when this program started. From a public health perspective, art is a great medium to get messages to the public in an inspiring way.

Ox - Orthopaedic surgeons: as strong as an ox and almost twice as clever? Multicentre prospective comparative study

The BMJ like JAMA also contains captivating pictures and art work to give the viewer an impression. This one article about orthopaedic surgeons portrays the surgeon as Ox. Its fundamental aim is to get physicians to read the article and make an opinion. Art offers this gateway for readers, allowing them read articles that they would normally not come across.

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Tanuka Palit

The painting of the Ox seems somewhat superimposed. It is a bit ambiguous to whether this is a painting or a photo that has been manipulated. Nonetheless it is captivating and goes well with the article.

Figure 7 - Orthopaedic surgeons: as strong as an ox and almost twice as clever? (2011) by Clive Featherstone¹⁸
Art Therapy

This form of therapy uses art as communication between the patient and the therapist. Its main aim is to allow the person to change and grow through interpretation of the art, and build a healthy relationship with the therapist. It allows a release of expression for the patient, and no art experience is necessary.  

Group art therapy as an adjunctive treatment for people with schizophrenia: multicentre pragmatic randomised trial  

An RCT was carried out on 417 schizophrenic patients aged eighteen or over. Schizophrenia is a severe mental disorder. People often present with so call “positive symptoms”, hallucinations and delusions, and “negative symptoms”, loss of energy and impaired attention etc. Whilst the use of antipsychotic medication can decrease the positive signs of schizophrenia, it has little impact on the negative symptoms that come with the disease. It is said that social interventions such as art therapy can greatly improve the health of schizophrenia. It was a three armed trial. A third of patients were given art therapy classes with standard care. Another arm was enrolled in an activity group with standard care, but no art therapy classes. The final third were only given standard care. Functioning of the patient was assessed using the global assessment of functioning scale. Mental health symptoms were assessed using the positive and negative syndrome scale 24 months after the trial. However the end of the trial revealed that art therapy did not improve these outcomes. Neither did the focus of activity groups. 

Patients were chosen from four centres across England and Northern Ireland, all were outpatients. They were chosen based on their clinical diagnosis of schizophrenia, from their case notes. It may have been relevant to also have some set criteria about what each patient should present with, as schizophrenia can have varying degrees of severity. The randomisation was carried out by an independent telephone service which is both fair and robust. When carrying out the interventions, it was strictly monitored and careful teaching was given to co-ordinators to make sure they did influence the participants in any way. 

On results, the study had a big cohort or participants, more than they had originally set out for. During the trial 62 people were not entered for various reasons. Even though this number seems quite high, with a mental illness such Schizophrenia it is clear why. Ten fatal events were reported, four of these being suicides. However it was resolved that this was not due to the interventions. In the two year follow up, results were still the same with no change amongst groups. However in art therapy sessions, attendance was very poor so this is not a good indicator on how affective the treatment was. The study also compares other trials carried out and explains that attendance was poor also. It is hard to get participants to enjoy art therapy when they may not like art itself. It seems a hard therapy to evaluate due to lack of attendance and enthusiasm. This hurdle needs to be crossed until a good judgement can be made about its effectiveness. It may have been useful to swap the three arms around during the trial. The more comparisons between the three groups could have produced a more promising result.

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Conclusion

Art is the greatest way a man can express oneself. Throughout this SSM, each artist has been evaluated in their expression of themselves. Their illnesses, their thoughts and inspiration have been seen. Art continually bridges that gap between the patient and doctor. Whether it is through a journal cover, or on a hospital wall, art gives us a chance to visualise what is really going on inside us. It is vital to realise the links between art and medicine and how doctors can use it to their advantage. It would be interesting to look at more artworks in the future, maybe giving a more detailed progression of how medicine in art has changed over time. However even though this project focused on artworks, describing more about the links of art practice in medicine would also be useful. It is also apparent art’s affect on medicine, through the work of anatomy and the inspiration of artists. Even though it may not always be clear, the link between art and medicine is as vital as ever.
Appendix 1: Timetable

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I established that I wanted to look at Art related to Medicine. I talked to fellow students, professors and visited the Liverpool Medical Institution to look at JAMA journals. I also started the medical peace work course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I started to collect what art works I wanted to discuss. I also read parts of Giorgio Bordin’s Medicine in Art (A Guide to Imagery) to understand how medicine has influenced art over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I started to write my SSM, analysing each artwork. I finished reading through the medical peace work booklets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organising and improving the layout of my SSM</td>
</tr>
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Appendix 2: Evaluation of the Medical Peace Work (MPW) Courses

I have learnt a lot about medical humanities from the MPW. It was good to read about something out of my chosen topic as well, getting the full experience out of this special study module. Like the website iterates it is your duty to know about health inequalities and challenges that some people face in developed and developing countries. Medical Peace Work introduces us to thinking about peace and conflict, the undercurrent of Human Rights and the challenges of violence. I enjoyed reading these courses but found the online exams very hard and got quite disheartened. MPW offers information unique to anything else found on the internet I find. The courses are easy to read and understandable, however they are extensive and sometimes can be quite draining. I will definitely use the course booklets in the future as a reference, as they explain terms very clearly and have a well laid out and accessible glossary. In the following paragraphs I will highlight the courses I found the most interesting.

Course one introduces us to conflict and peace, introducing us to many theories and terminology. Its use of diagrams to represent the relation between violence and peace made me understand the theory better. Peace can never be purely defined by one single definition, and the course is able to highlight peace’s many facets. I particularly thought the ABC triangle of Conflict was important. It displays the foundations of what conflict is based on. Any point lost in the triangle will surely bring an end to the conflict. Due to the length of the course, I felt like I had to write many things down and keep referring back to pages. However this helped me lock in concepts and increase my understanding.

I found course three quite eye opening. At first glance I was astonished at the varied ways people can cause war and destruction. Some of the pictures are quite traumatic and help
visualise the extent of the damage caused by different weaponry. I found lesson 2.3 particularly interesting, “Rape as a military strategy.” I was really taken aback by the title firstly but was hooked to read on. Sexualized violence comes from man’s innate biological aggression\(^{32}\), used more of violence on intimate body parts, than using the act as a weapon. To think that in early histories it was not mentioned as sexualized violence has existed seems inhumane. The course points out actions against rape violence and also adds in other resources such as film and articles that we can read to further our knowledge.

Interpersonal and self violence are key issues that are apparent in our society today. I found some of the figures quite shocking. I was particularly interested by the table on page 10 of course 7\(^{33}\) but found it quite hard to follow and understand. I was confused on how the columns related. I think some explanation is needed on this, maybe some more statistics. Overall I was shocked at the costs the world spends on interpersonal violence.

I see that the MPW website has a Facebook page. I think this is good to appeal to more health workers and get more people interested in the courses. With the recent events of Koni 2012, and all the war and conflicts highlighted in these courses, it would be interesting to get more up to date news. Whilst the course provides a good foundation for knowledge, it needs to be implemented and thought about more in everyday situations.

\(^{32}\)Medical Peace Work. Course 3.  

\(^{33}\) Medical Peace Work. Course 7.  
Appendix 3: Presentation

**Medicine:** portrayed through the world of Art

“Someone who is willing to bare their soul for the whole world, that is what art is. Art the only justification for pain out there.”
Danny O’Donoghue, The Script.

By Tanuka Palit

How are art and medicine linked?

- It seems obscure that medicine, a so called scientific discipline can be connected to art, be it a painting, illustration or photography. The next few slides highlight only some of the ways art and medicine can be linked.
- Firstly I shall define what I mean by Art: “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power”
- This SSM looks primarily at visual artworks illustrated in different sources and projects.

Art’s affect on Medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leonardo Da Vinci: The Vitruvian Man</th>
<th>William Hunter: Anatomy of the Gravid Uterus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Image of Leonardo Da Vinci: The Vitruvian Man]</td>
<td>[Image of William Hunter: Anatomy of the Gravid Uterus]</td>
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Medicine’s affect on Art

<table>
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<th>Post 21st Century</th>
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<td>MackGach: Skill With Burning Cigarettes</td>
<td>Tanaz Hoor: Bones: Where the Heart Is</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Image of MackGach: Skill With Burning Cigarettes]</td>
<td>[Image of Tanaz Hoor: Bones: Where the Heart Is]</td>
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Art in Medical Practice

- Art is used as a therapeutic mechanism that can be used in patients with degenerative diseases such as Schizophrenia. Creative activities are said to improve health.
- Art is normally canvassed across hospital walls. Children’s hospitals take a great interest in displaying art work to lift the mood of patients.
Tanuka Palit

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