

Characteristic of Form and Contents of Collage Arts for Cancer Patients Under Chemotherapy and Utility

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Received: March 1, 2026

Accepted: March 23, 2026

Online Published: March 30, 2026

doi:10.20849/ajsss.v11i1.1552

URL: <https://doi.org/10.20849/ajsss.v11i1.1552>

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate characteristics of the Form, Contents of collage arts, and utility of the therapy through changes over sessions of cancer patients under chemotherapy. Eight patients participated in this study. A clinical therapist conducted collage therapy to patients during chemotherapy two times. A participant made arts on tables beside a reclining chair or a bed for about one hour. As for the Form of arts, there are the content category and the form category for assessment. About the content category, the number of “Friendship” “Existence” “Landscape” “Object” “Food” was many. About the form category, the number of “Layering” “Large margin” “Hollowing out” was many. As for characteristics of arts, the number of cut outs like “Food” “Hot Spring” “Shrine” “Sunset” “Train” “Torii” was many. As for changes from first to second session, we observed “Expression of intention to live, religious mind, healing, conflict, or hope for future,” “Introducing sense of reality” “Integration” or “Introducing generational inheritance.” These results showed that cancer patients under chemotherapy are interested humans not so intimate, feel death both consciously and unconsciously. Collage therapy may be useful for them to express their mind and psychological well-being.

Keywords: cancer patient, chemotherapy, collage therapy, life and death, uncertainty

1. Introduction

Distress related to cancer diagnosis and treatment is explicitly tied to several common practical, physical, and psychological problems (Calrson, 2012). Depression and anxiety are common among patients receiving palliative care (Wilson, et al. 2007). Particularly in cases of chemotherapy, patients confronted with fear of ambiguity or recurrence of disease, they often experience anxiety or depression. Jiang, et al. (2020) showed that art therapy decreased anxiety, symptoms, depression, and improved the quality of life of cancer patients from systematic review. Lin, et al. (2024), Bozcuket, et al. (2017), and Elimimian, et al. (2020) showed efficacy of art therapy on psychology of cancer patients. Ando, et al. (2023) (2024a) (2024b) showed effects of drawing or collage therapy for patients under chemotherapy. Although these previous studies demonstrated effects of art therapy, the format of characteristics of collage arts were not investigated. This investigation may be useful for medical careers to understand patients' minds. The purpose of this study was to investigate the format and characteristics of collage arts in art therapy.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The inclusion criteria were cancer in advanced stage III or IV under chemotherapy, ability to communicate, and age >20 years. The exclusion criteria were severe pain or physical symptoms diagnosed by the primary physician, and cognitive impairment such as dementia or serious mental illness. A special oncology nurse recruited 10 participants and eight completed the study (Table 1). Two could not complete the study. One could not receive chemotherapy, and another one did not want to make art. Performance status (PS) was measured by the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group Performance Status Rating (ECOG-PSR), which is a single item rating of five activity levels from 0 (fully active) to 4 (completely disabled) (Oken, et al, 1982).

Table 1. Background of participants

| ID | Gender | Age | Stage | PS | Married |
|----|--------|-----|-------|----|---------|
| 1 | Female | 70s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 2 | Female | 60s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 3 | Female | 60s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 4 | Female | 70s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 5 | Female | 60s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 6 | Female | 60s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 7 | Female | 70s | IV | 2 | Yes |
| 8 | Male | 70s | IV | 2 | Yes |

2.2 Procedure

About collage therapy, it has been developed by Moritani (1988) in Japan. In the counseling session, a client cut photos or magazines into cut outs and paste them on paper. There are two ways: the magazine picture method in which a client cut photo or magazines for himself, collage box method in which a therapist cuts them and prepares cut out. We used both methods. A therapist had experience of collage therapy for patients under chemotherapy, and knew patients' liking such as food, trip, landscapes, religious things. So, the therapist prepared magazines or photos of these things and prepared cut outs as materials. The total session time was about one hour.

About procedure, an oncology certified nurse specialist selected patients who might be candidates for participants and explained about this study in the outpatient's chemotherapy room using a flyer. After getting informed consent, the clinical psychologist with art therapist certification conducted collage therapy. A therapist watched over, and the client and the therapist talked about the art afterward. Two weeks later, they had their second collage therapy session.

2.3 Analysis

We investigated the format and characteristics by scoring based on Yamagami (2014). And we compared arts of first session and second session and chose characteristics by two therapies talking.

2.4 Ethical Consideration

The ethical review board at Nisikyusyu University, Saga, Japan approved the study. The psychologist explained the study in detail and got agreement.

3. Result

3.1 Analysis of Collage Scoring Category

Collage scoring includes Contents and Form analysis.

We showed the analysis of Content (Table 2). Content categories include <Anti-personal> and <Anti-material>.

About <Anti-personal: subcategories like Friendship, Child, Existence, Assertion, Emotion, and Animal>, the number of "**Existence**" and "**Friendship**" was many.

About <Anti-material: subcategories like Hostility, Food, Object, Landscape, Abstract>, the number of "**Landscape**", "**Object**", and "**Food**" was many.

Table 2. The number and percentage of contents category in collage scoring

| Category | Sub-category | Number (percentage) |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Anti-personal | Friendship | 6 (11%) |
| | Child | 1 (2%) |
| | Existence | 10 (19%) |
| | Assertion | 0 (0%) |
| | Emotion | 0 (0%) |
| | Animal | 1 (2%) |
| Sum | | 18 (34%) |
| Anti-material | Hostility | 0 (0%) |
| | Food | 9 (17%) |
| | Object | 11 (21%) |
| | Landscape | 15 (28%) |
| | Abstract | 0 (0%) |
| Sum | | 35 (66%) |

As for the Form category (Table 3), evaluation categories were <Expression> <Conflict> <Retreat>, and there were sub-categories. The number of “Layering” in Expression, “Large margin” in Retreat was many.

Table 3. The number and percentage of the Form category in collage scoring

| Category | Sub-category | the number |
|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Expression | Cut-out over 30 | 0 |
| | Layering | 8 |
| | Hollowing out | 1 |
| | Creation | 0 |
| Conflict | Pasted all over | 0 |
| | Division | 0 |
| | Protrusion | 0 |
| | Text insertion | 0 |
| Retreat | Large margin | 2 |
| | Rectangle | 0 |
| Sum | | 11 |

Next, we investigated the number of cut outs appeared during two sessions: Food (9 times), Hot Spring (8), Train (6), Shrine (5), Sunset (3), Torii (3).

We also showed patients’ main words in collage therapy (Table 4).

Table 4. Patients’ main words in the collage session

| | Patients’ words in first session | Patients’ words in second session |
|-----|--|---|
| ID1 | “I put what I want to eat to be healthy.” | “The most interesting is the train. I like eating. I put flower.” |
| ID2 | “I expressed healing by much green” | “I was introduced hospice by the doctor. I will enjoy until the last time.” |
| ID3 | “I believed a religion. Then I put Torii, shrine, and forest.” | “I imagined calm feeling and made to be healed.” |
| ID4 | “I made an art imaging calm feeling. | “I expressed volunteer activity of cooking and healing places. |
| ID5 | “I took care my husband with handicap. I went on a trip in old time. I can’t now. I want to eat gourmet cuisine occasionally.” | “I expressed the old me, my son’s work, and the figure of my grandchildren in future. |
| ID6 | “I made an art remembering going trip.” | “I made memories of trips. The five-year survival rate was 20%.” |
| ID7 | “I used to trip in spring and fall. I can’t go now.” | “I want to go on a trip, taste wine, eat special dinner, take a hot spring bath with relaxed. |
| ID8 | “I express fine dining restaurant.” “I wonder if until when I should receive medical treatment.” | “I want to go on a trip with me wife, because I gave trouble to her. |

Next, we show main characteristics of cut outs of arts, and we find the utility of making collage in two sessions (Table 5).

Table 5. Main characteristics of cut-outs of arts and utilities

| | First session | Second session | Utility of making collage |
|-----|---|--|--|
| ID1 | 1) Foods 2) Space is large 3) Strawberry flowing shows loss of reality (Figure 1) | 1) Food, Train, Shrine, Botanical 2) The art is integrated by the trip theme with reality (Figure 2). | 1) Integration by trip theme 2) Introducing sense of reality |
| ID2 | 1) Big lakes, Torii, Sunset, Hot Spring (Figure 3) | 1) Green forest, food, Sea, botanicals 2) The art is bright (Figure 4) | 1) Introducing sense of reality 2) Expression intention to live until last time |
| ID3 | 1) Shrine, Torii, Lake, Forest 2) Center is empty 3) Afterlife world | 1) Many layering of sunset, torii, shrine | 1) Confirmation of religious mind |
| ID4 | 1) Shrine, Torii, Sunset, Hot Spring, flower 2) Center is torii 3) This world and afterlife world | 1) Many foods, cooking, Lake, Relaxed lady 2) Bright color art | 1) Introducing sense of reality |

| | | | |
|-----|--|--|---|
| ID5 | 1) four big cut-outs. 2) Swin may show escapism. 3) Lonely image | 1) Old me, Son, Grandchildren, Food, Landscape 2) She was relaxing. | 1) Introducing of Intergenerational inheritance |
| ID6 | 1) Shrine, Train, Hot spring, Sunset, Cherry trees, hotel, flower 2) This world and the after life world (Figure 5) | 1) Sky, Landscape, Hot Spring, Waterfall, 2) Healing image (Figure 6) | 1) Introducing sense of reality 2) Expression of healing |
| ID7 | 1) Food, Sunset, Train, Cherrytree, Forest, Sea 2) Layering cut-outs and Hollowing out 3) Dissociation between present state and hope. | 1) Sunset, Hot Spring, Food, Flower 2) Layering 3) Layering may show expression. | 1) Expression of conflict between present and idea |
| ID8 | 1)Food, River, Restaurant, River, Hot Spring, dolphin | 1)Reality by trip theme 2)Integrity image by the theme | 1) Expression of future hope |

The following were collage arts by patients. We presented some of them.



Figure 1 (ID1: first session)
Title: "What I want to eat"
There were strawberries like flowing and Fresh raw Sashimi



Figure 2 (ID1: second session)
Title: "Trip" The center is a Shrine.
The upper right was the train, and the low right was law fish. There are some flowers.



Figure 3 (first session)

The title: Healing

There are large lake cut-outs. There is a female who was facing backward and a small torii.



Figure 4 (second session)

The title: "Living now"

There are the big forest and sea. The center was vegetables with dishes. The left low side, there are Hibiscus and a female statue.



Figure 5 (first session)

The title: "Demand of healing"

The left upper side, the train, the right upper side hot spring outside sea. The left low side, Sashimi.



Figure 6 (second session)

The title: "Peace of mind with generation change"

The old me, son's work, and figure of grandchildren in future.

4. Discussion

4.1 Analysis of Collage Scoring Category

About Anti-personal, the number of "Existence (19%)" and "Friendship (11%)" was many. "Existence" means <neutral relationships> and "Friendship" means <intimate relationships>. About interpersonal relationships, patients under chemotherapy may have much more neutral relationships than intimate ones. It is because patients were limited in activities because of chemotherapy and they focused on themselves by the treatment. These results show that chemotherapy may influence the interpersonal relationships of patients.

About Anti-material, the number of "Landscape (28%)" "Object (21%)" "Food: (17%)" was many. "Landscape" means <emotions with a sense of distance>, "Object" means <interests and hobbies>, and "Food" means <desire or urge to be involved.> These results show that cancer patients have desire to be involved to live with interests to others, but not so emotional. This ambivalent mind may be explained by the Uncertainty theory. Mishel (1988) showed the Uncertainty theory in which uncertainly is the inability to determine the meaning of illness-related

events, especially the ambiguity and unpredictability of future medical condition like treatments effects, rate of disease progression, and their impact on prognosis. Thus, since patients have uncertainty to life or death, they feel ambivalent. We can understand patients' mind from these arts.

4.2 Characteristics of Cut Outs in Collage Arts

The high number of cut-outs in arts (Table 5) were "Food" "Hot Spring" "Train" "Shrine" "Sunset" "Torii." Since Torii is Shinto Shrine Gate (in Japan) which separates places of the present world and the afterlife world. These cut-outs suggest death. Sun (or sunset) has the same meaning in Symbol and Image Dictionary (Vries, 1981). These cut-outs suggested that patients feel the afterlife and express themselves unconsciously. Moreover, "Food" means requirement of urge to be involved. They really need something to be involved. If patients seemed to be depressed or spiritless, they might have desire to live. The Hot Spring represents their requirement of healing, because they received chemotherapy regularly and limited their lives from their words (Table 4). From characteristic of cut outs, "Life and Death," "Desire to be involved," and "Healing" were expressed as characteristics.

4.3 The Utility of Collage Therapy

As for ID1, she began to try new chemotherapy medicine as a last method. In first session (Figure1), large space showed low energy and flowing strawberries suggest low reality. In second session (Figure 2), she rode a train, looked at flowers and ate dishes as a trip. There is "Integrity." Thus, collage therapy is useful to introduce sense of reality.

As for ID2, she finished chemotherapy and began palliative care as terminal stage. In first session (Figure 3), there was large lake water field and a Torii. It suggested death. But in second session (Figure 4), there was a sea, Hibiscus, or law and dishes vegetable. In Figure 4, center was law vegetable or dishes as food. Food may show desire or urgent to live until death. This suggests that her collage therapy introduced sense of reality and hope to live.

As for ID4, she was confused because of her husband's nursing care and her cancer recurrence and hoped a little heal. In the first session (Figure 5), different directions of a train, care, and a swing suggested confusion. Sea suggested the source of life. She might want to go back to her source. In the second session (Figure 6), she showed her past generation by walking, sun's generation by two working men, and the grandchildren generation by smiling children. It showed "Intergenerational inheritance."

Previous studies (Smriti, et al., 2022; Hu, et al., 2021; Oliveira, et al.; 2022) showed that art therapy has significant effects on improving emotional expression, self-awareness, self-esteem, resilience, and anxiety. In the present study, patients could express intention to live until last time, healing, conflict, and future hope. Moreover, collage therapy was useful to "Integration" "Introducing sense of reality" and "Introducing Intergenerational inheritance."

McClaymont (2023) showed that collage therapy involves assembling different material, such as images, text, and objects, to create a visual composition representing individuals to tap into their subconscious and express their innermost anxieties in a non-verbal and symbolic way. In the present study, patients under chemotherapy who experience uncertainty for future or confront death, collage therapy was useful to express their fear in safely form with a therapist.

5. Limitation of the Study

As for limitations, the number of participants was small. Thus, we need to include many more participants to confirm validation. Moreover, as for effects of therapy, we need to much more collage therapy continuously.

6. Conclusion

We found that patients under chemotherapy were interested in humans not so intimately, keeping distance in human relationships. Moreover, they feel death in both consciously and unconsciously. Collage therapy was useful to express their mind, and it promotes well-being by "introducing sense of reality," "Integration," and "Introducing generational inheritance."

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Acknowledgments

I especially thank Professor Yoshifumi Nishimura (Nishikyusyu University) for giving me precious comments.

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