

GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on the Uses of Arts in the Healthcare Process

Christine Condaris, Department of Fine & Performing Arts, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, MA, USA

*I saw an angel in the marble and carved
until I set him free. - Michelangelo*

At this time of rising healthcare costs, the arts are often deemed as unnecessary expenses and therefore the first to be eliminated as a cost-saving measure. However, healthcare research has shown that when the fine and performing arts are incorporated into health practices and medical facilities, the savings outweigh the cost. What kinds of healing work can the arts facilitate? How do the fine and performing arts support the work of medical professionals and promote health? This issue of *The International Journal for User Driven Healthcare* investigates the uses of arts in the healthcare process.

Professor Lisa Raye Garlock of Washington University takes us on a personal journey, describing her own plight with osteoarthritis and her successful use of visual art in lieu of post-surgery pain medication. Her story is titled "*Meditation Painting and Pain Management: A Self Study*."

Both Pauline Etim-Ubah and Anita Jensen argue convincingly that the arts contribute to positive wellbeing. Etim-Ubah explores the relationship between the arts and mental health in "*The Arts as Public Service*," while Jensen looks at the health benefits to participants of a joint art project in "*European Collaboration of Healthcare and Art with Focus on Social Inclusion and Wellbeing*."

The article by authors Raphaely, Marinova, Crisp and Panayotov is most provocative. The authors discuss the merits of part-time vegetarianism in "*Flexitarianism: A User-Based Dietary Choice for Improved Wellbeing*." Equally stimulating is the work by Professors Pragya Pandey Joshi and Ankur Joshi who share their very original ideas on the mental dynamics of illness in "*Illness Narratives: Creative Drama Within*."

Nicole Hoffmann documents how art therapy helped decrease depression and stabilize dementia in an individual with Parkinson's disease. Her article, "Using Art Therapy to Address

Cognitive Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease" dovetails nicely with Nola Freeman's fascinating study, "*Visual Communication to Improve Relationship Quality in Spousal Caregivers of Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease*," on the use of art as a means of communication between Alzheimer's patients and their spousal caregivers.

Finally, the skills necessary for physicians to successfully transition from the medical classroom to the patient world are the themes of two articles. Jyoti Nath Modi and Tejinder Singh discuss how "professionalism" can be taught via "Mentoring in Medical Colleges: Bringing Out the Best in People." Physician-patient

interpersonal communication is the subject of the essay authored by a group of medical professionals titled "*User Driven Learning: Blending the Best of Clinical Medicine and Humanities to Infuse 'Joy' into the Medical Curriculum*". And lastly Gregory Scheckler, Professor of Art at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, responds to the personal journey of others in his review of *The Art of Medicine in Metaphors: a Collection of Poems and Narratives*.

Christine Condaris
Guest Editor
IJUDH