

World Congress on

# Health and Medical Sociology

September 19-20, 2016 Las Vegas, USA

## MORE DOODLING, LESS STRESS? DO ART TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER HELP REDUCE THE STRESS OF THEIR PARENTS?

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This research focuses on three main learning objectives of providing art-training programs as Artism to children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The three main learning objectives of this research on art training programs are 1) reduce parents' stress, 2) explain how to organize an effective therapy program, and 3) build support for a community of parents. The study empirically analyzes data collected from the parents whose autistic kids take art lessons from Artism Creativity Center, a non-profit organization in Northern California, and data from comparable parents whose autistic kids do not take art lessons. This study provides evidence on whether and how art-training programs for autistic kids help reduce their parents' stress.

The study shows that children with ASD who attend Artism or a similar art and drawing program show higher levels of improvement than those who do not attend, which attests to the effectiveness that art therapy programs exert if these programs are created and organized well. The study further finds that one of the main factors that make Artism succeed is that unlike most art therapy courses, Artism does not just let the students "free draw," but it develops specified curriculum to each student to target their specific needs. In doing so, Artism teaches children with ASD how to use elements and principles of art and expression to communicate their moods and thoughts. This can be done for simple and straightforward reasons such as how color is used to express mood and other associations made between artwork and expression.

### Biography

Rachel Jin is currently a junior at Campolindo High school in Moraga, California, USA. In 2014, she founded Artism Creativity Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping children with ASD learn and develop using art techniques. Currently the center has more than 20 volunteer art teachers and 30 students. Rachel had previously worked with autistic children for 2 years at Angelove Family Support Center as a volunteer.

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