Reviewer Form

The Journal of Child Life: Psychosocial Theory and Practice

Reviewer Name

Sydney | Jamison

First Name | Last Name

Date of Review

June | 28 | 2024

Month | Day | Year

Article Number

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0194731

Overall Quality of Article

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Worst I've reviewed for JCL	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	Best I've reviewed for JCL

Publication Decision

- ☐ Recommend rejection. Not a fit for JCL.
- ☐ Recommend revise and resubmit. Merit to article but revisions and a second review needed before acceptance.
- ☑ Recommend accept with revisions. Article of sufficient merit for JCL but requires edits before publication.
- ☐ Recommend accept as is. Article is of exceptional merit and only minor copyedits are needed before publication.

How did you feel about the publication decision? Was it easy to make or were you unsure?

I believe this article should be published because it adds meaningful insights to research related to animal assisted therapy (AAT). This decision was easy to make because the methods used helped ensure reliability of the data collected and answered the researchers objectives. However, it could use revisions related to the safety protocol section and should mention other factors that could have influenced results.

Create your own automated PDFs with JotForm PDF Editor

JotForm

Rationale: Is the topic relevant and timely for readers? Is the question important for child life?

The topic of the efficacy of animal assisted therapy (AAT) for pediatric cancer patients is both relevant and timely. AAT has become increasingly accepted in many hospitals with child life specialists often running the programs. I believe that it is important for CCLSs to have the quantitative information that this study seeks to provide to validate the work they do. This can help child life specialists to advocate for the expansion of AAT and inform others about the impacts it has on patient wellbeing.

Background: Does cited work logically and persuasively support the need for the research or investigation that this paper undertakes?

The researchers in this article state that while animal-assisted therapy (AAT) has been studied in the oncological context, the research has either focused on adult populations or been qualitative in nature. These studies have reported benefits from AAT including anxiety and stress reduction, increased sense of well-being,and better adaptation to proposed therapies. These studies are cited in the article and provide meaningful infomation. However, it is evident that the research this study attempts to undertake is needed because no other cited works contain quanitative data about the impact of AAT for pediatic oncology patients.

Methods: Is the research question well composed? Are the chosen methods appropriate for the research question? Is the approach to analysis appropriate for the question?

The research question,“What is the quantitative impact of an AAT program consisting of 3, 30-minute sessions in children undergoing outpatient oncological treatment based on psychological, physiological, and quality of life indications?”is well composed. However, it could benefit from the inclusion of a comparison group. The methods chosen are appropriate because the instruments used are quantitative in nature and applied both before and after the interventions. Additionally, the analysis of data utilizing statistical analysis was helpful because it allowed the reader to determine the significance of variable changes.

Conclusions: Do the conclusions drawn accurately reflect the data? Are limitations presented? What about ideas for future research and clinical implementation?

The researchers concluded that improvements in the factors measured including pain, irritation, and stress may be directly related to the benefits of AAT.This conclusion seems reasonable. However, the limitations of the study including the absence of a control group, a quasi-experimental design, and a small sample size must be considered as potentially impacting outcomes. The researchers addressed these limitations and explained the need for further research.I believe that they should also consider peer-to-peer interactions in the AAT group sessions and the lack of data collection after every 30 minute session to be limitations.

Context: Is the paper relevant to child life? Are the ideas innovative? Is the paper aware of the current healthcare climate? How does the paper treat culture, race, and systemic injustice?

Create your own automated PDFs with JotForm PDF Editor

Child life is not a key term utilized in this article. However, the study is relevant because animal assisted therapy (AAT) is an intervention that child life specialists use to promote the well being of patients. The numerical data that this study provides is innovative because other studies related to AAT prior to this study's publication did not focus on quantitative measures. While some sociodemographic information was collected in this research, culture, race, and systemic injustice were not considered. This information would be helpful to include in the research to ensure that it is applicable to a variety of demographics.

Optional: Please list any specific recommendations you have for the authors.

This study had two objectives which were to propose an intervention and safety protocol and to evaluate the impact of AAT on children undergoing pediatric oncological treatment. I recommend writing more about how the safety protocol proposed was created, how its effectiveness was determined, and how it is innovative. However, if this information is not available, I recommend narrowing the focus of the article down to only the second objective. Additionally, I recommend the inclusion of peer interactions and socialization as a limitation to the data. Future research could benefit from a control group and the inclusion of diversity.

Optional: Here, let the editor know if you have any candid concerns/feedback.

This article was edited nicely. The information presented was easy-to-read and I did not notice any grammatical errors.

Create your own automated PDFs with JotForm PDF Editor

JotForm