



A Study on the Effectiveness of Green Social Prescribing in Support Groups for Patients with Cancer and Chronic Disease

Chia-Chen Yeh¹, Li-Nien Han¹

¹ Social Service Department, MacKay Memorial Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan

Background and Objective

Green social prescribing, emphasizing nature-based and horticultural therapy, is a non-pharmacological approach to promoting mental health, well-being, and resilience. These activities may alleviate stress and enhance social interaction; however, empirical evidence from hospital-based settings remains limited.

This study examined the effects of horticultural therapy on the psychological and overall well-being of patients with cancer and chronic disease.

Methods/intervention

A mixed-methods design was employed, incorporating nine sessions conducted between July 2024 and July 2025 at a medical center in northern Taiwan. Pre- and post-intervention changes in the WHO-5 Well-Being Index were analyzed using paired t-tests, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, and correlation analysis. Qualitative data from participant feedback and observations were thematically analyzed.

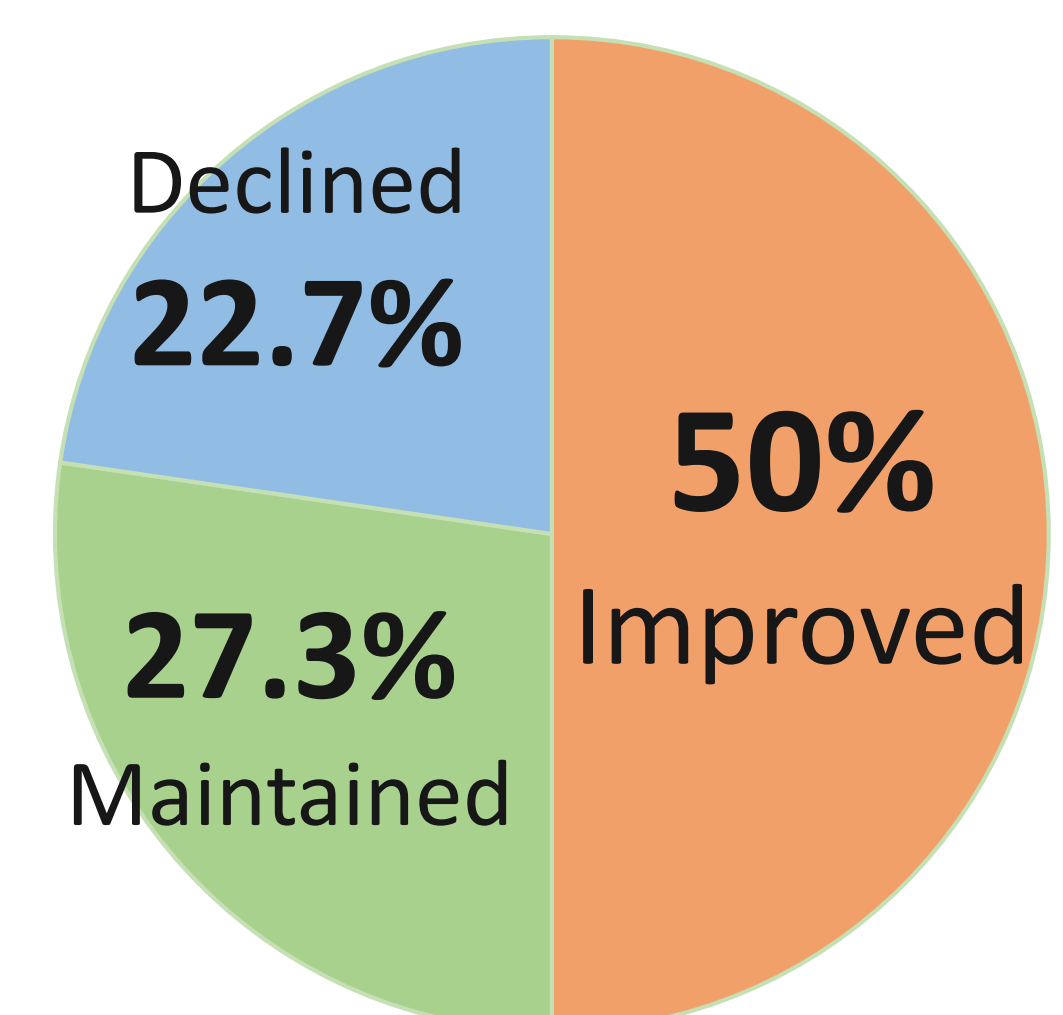


Fostering Psychosocial Resilience through Natural Crafting

Results

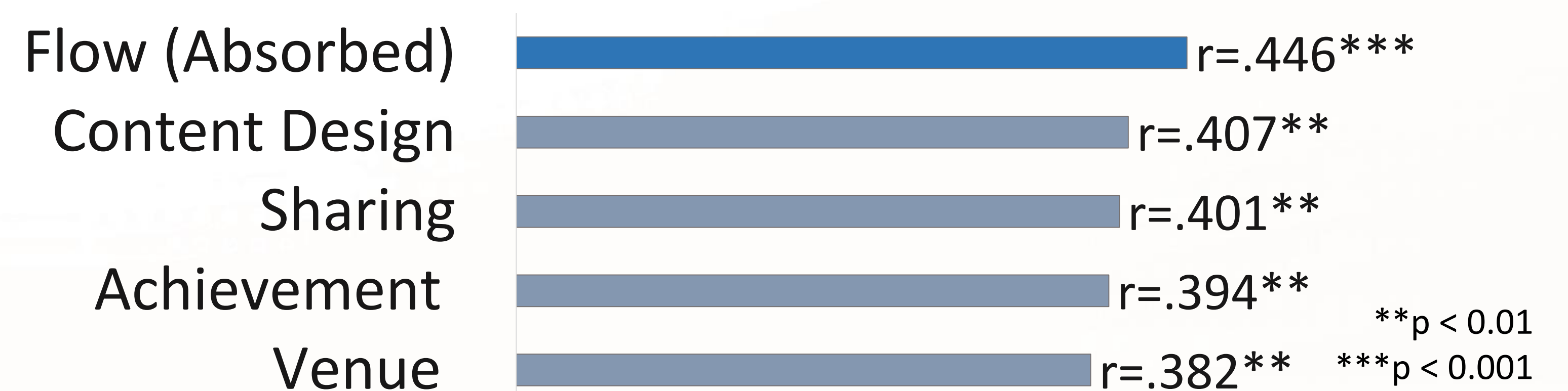
Changes in WHO-5 Well-being Index Scores

50% Improved	+8.76
27.3% Maintained	Perfect scores, suggesting a ceiling effect.
22.7% Declined	-17.28, primarily due to disease progression.
Overall mean change: +0.45 (p = .859, d = 0.04)	



Design & Engagement: Key Drivers of Well-being

Well-being correlated positively with satisfaction domains:



Qualitative findings revealed three themes



Focused Engagement

Participants forgot discomfort during crafting and gained a sense of accomplishment.



Sensory Experience

Plant scents and tactile materials evoked calm and environmental awareness.



Emotional Support

Sharing illness experiences fostered a sense of "not walking alone," with families observing greater optimism.

Conclusions

Horticultural therapy was feasible and well accepted. Although overall effects were not statistically significant due to ceiling effects, some improvements were clinically meaningful.

It is recommended that social workers monitor participants and communicate with case managers to ensure continuity of care, and that program designs be adapted to individual needs amid disease fluctuations.

