



Cost-benefit evaluation of Artlift 2009-2012: summary

Introduction

Artlift delivers participatory art sessions in GP surgeries and is funded by Gloucestershire NHS, mainly from charitable funds. It consists of patients being referred by GPs and health staff for 10 week 2 hr art sessions. This evaluation looked at two aspects of health service use by participants, the use of GP time, measured as consultation with GPs, and cost of other uses of different areas of the NHS. This was a simple observational study and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee. It was designed to be used with the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) Evaluation of ArtLift. Further qualitative work when the database from this study and the UoG evaluation is combined may shed new light on the type of patients that benefit the most from arts intervention.

Method

A sample size of 90 patients was used for the study. Overall approximately 500 patients were referred to ArtLift over the three years. Face to face GP consultations were counted for the year before the patient was seen by the artist, and for a year afterwards. In addition, health spend data was collected for patients in the year before and the year after attending.

Results

GP consultations

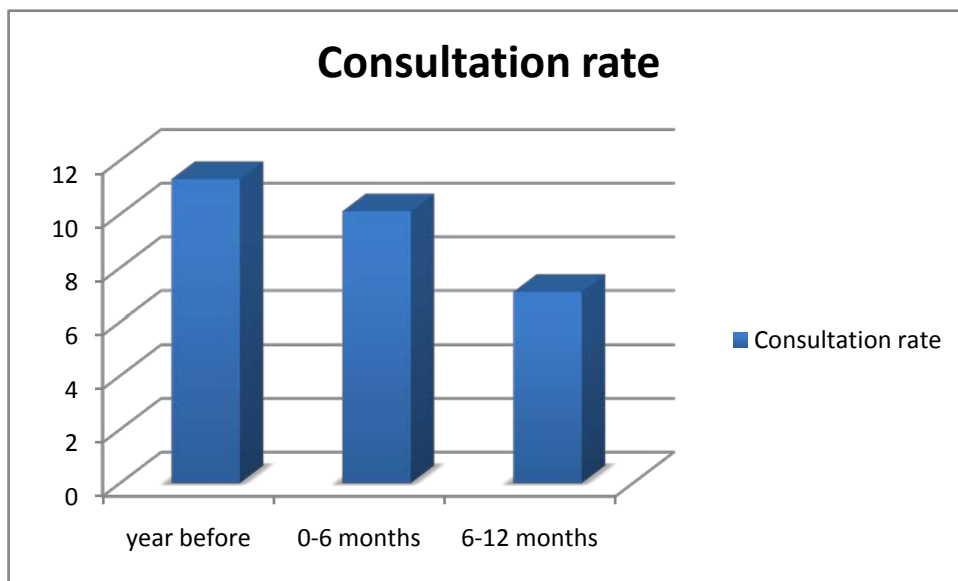
Consultation in year before = 1014 = 11.3 consults/year

Consultation 0-6m after = 454 = 10.1 consults/ year

Consultation rate 7-12m after= 320 = 7.1 consults/year

Percentage reduction = 24%

6 months after seeing an artist consultation rates dropped by 37%



Healthcare Spend

Hospital admission numbers- Year before =54

Year after =33

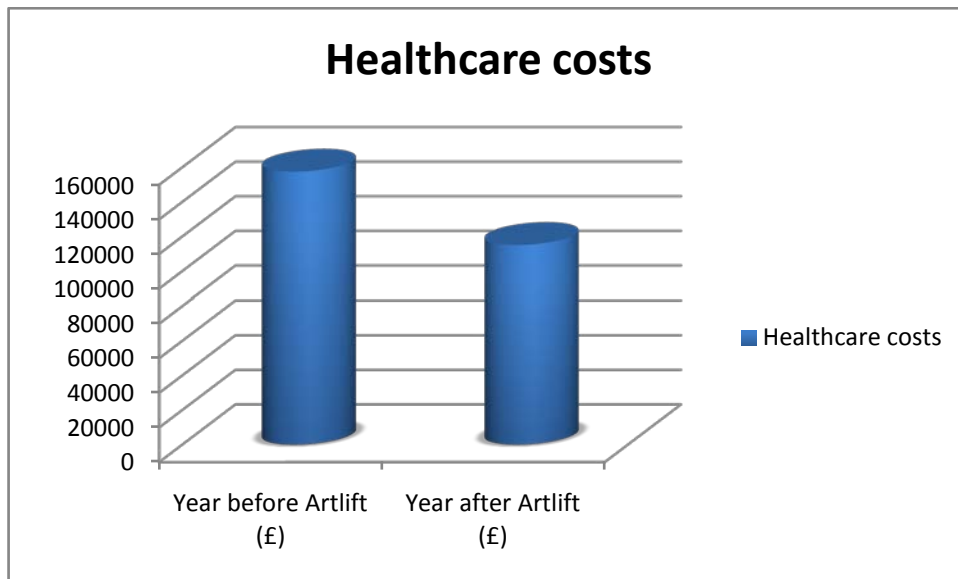
No significant change in Outpatient or A&E attendances

Overall spend before = £157,473

Overall spend after = £115,050

Observed change after art intervention = **£42,423**

This is a **27%** reduction in overall spend.



Cost benefit analysis

Number of patients = 500

Reduction of GP consultations per patient= 2.7

Average cost of GP consultation = £39.

Reduction in cost to GP per patient = **£105**

Reduction observed in Healthcare spend in 90 patients = £42,423

Observed reduction in spend per patient = **£471**

Total reduction in NHS costs per patient = £576

Cost of Artlift = £180,000

Cost per patient = **£360**

Conclusions

The research summarised here is a simple observational study and does not imply causality. However, there appears to be 2 main findings. The number of times a patient visits a GP after taking part in an arts intervention was observed to fall. The overall NHS health spend on patients was observed to reduce. Whilst no firm conclusion about the effects of art can be implied from this study, the results suggest that using an artist in primary care may well at least pay for itself. These effects are closely linked to proven improvements in wellbeing scores described by UoG evaluation (see separate document).

Dr Simon Opher GP, 9/12/2011