



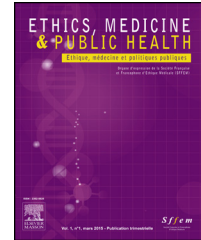
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## EDITORIAL

# COVID-19, museums, and art therapy



### KEYWORDS

COVID-19;  
 Museums;  
 Art;  
 Therapy

### MOTS CLÉS

COVID-19 ;  
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“Louvre Museum, 3 hours of visit each week, for two months”. This is the kind of medical prescription that we could see blooming soon as part of the therapeutic management in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. And this could as much concern the patients themselves (in the process of recovery) as the uninfected in the context of psychological disorders (stress or depressive syndrome, for the most part). On September 2, 2021, Belgium decided to take the plunge and prescribe visits to the museum (reimbursed by the health system) to relieve the mental health of Covid-19 patients (mainly touched by stress and burnout related to the pandemic) [1]. Other countries already benefit from such treatment programs (50 visits per year per patient is the upper limit in Canada, for example).

To adapt to government confinement obligations, some museums offer another alternative: that of virtual museums, as well as digital technology allowing access to specially adapted content [2].

In Paris, France, the musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac (specialised in extra-western arts) was thus a pioneer in this field, offering anthropological minutes and surprising focuses on works opening the public to an artistic escape and discovery [3].

This therapeutic mood is in close relationship with art therapy theories initiated in the management of neuro-psychiatric disorders (mainly dementia) and chronic pain: in this context, museums can play a welcoming role, and an interface between creators, creations and patients (some of whom may be caregivers themselves) [4–7]. They also have the possibility of being exported outside the walls, for example to the hospital room in the form of reproductions of works of art brought by mediators (Louvre Museum) [8], or in the form of real anthropological and/or archaeological objects moved and presented by the curators themselves (musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac) [9].

What other initiatives have been put in place in the artistic field for the care of victims of the COVID-19 pandemic (including caregivers traumatised by the conditions of care)? Is such a perspective, supported by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) [10] universally accepted, or does it encounter areas of resistance (conceptual or contextual)? We are awaiting specific examples and evaluations of such actions carried out with various audiences, mainly those affected by forced isolation and situations of psychological trauma.

## Disclosure of interest

The author declares that he has no competing interest.

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