Humorous interactions in hospitals and homes

Summary / Zusammenfassung
Over the past 40 years international organisations such as the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humour (AATH) or the well known Gesundheit!Institute have contributed to the promotion of the holistic approach to medical care which has been developed with the ideology that laughter, joy and creativity are important in healing people. Since the idea was pioneered it has led to various programmes, such as clowns in hospitals, humor professionals in homes for the elderly, or doing house calls. Research is very sparse, but so far scientific endorsement of this approach has shown the presence of clowns can reduce anxiety in hospital settings. However, studies have also run into methodological difficulties, when measuring emotional state changes, especially in patients who can be tense or anxious through the very nature of old age or dementia.

The aim of the present research project is to investigate four main research questions: 1) What are the personal factors that make a clown a good clown? 2) What changes happen within the audience during a clown intervention and how long do changes last? 3) What variations in clown/humour interventions exist and how can enjoyment and pleasure be measured (subjectively and objectively)? 4) What are the contributions from and effects on the institutional level? Positive psychology has put forward the concept of “positive institutions” which are ones that support positive emotions and focus on character strengths that foster better communities. Are hospitals with humour professionals positive institutions as humor and clowning may add to the overall wellbeing of their residents? To investigate how humour is used in the service of humanity the research team will collaborate with humor practitioners and institutions such as the Rote Nasen Verein Österreich, the Alters- und Pflegeheim Moosmatt and Clown Wieni, the foundation Humor Hilft Heilen, the ev. Johanneswerk, Clowns Kontakt.

Publications / Publikationen
Hofmann, J. (2015). Humor- wo er nährt und wo er stört [Where it nurtures and where it is inappropriate]. Schulblatt Thurgau, 6, 7 – 11.


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Other Links to external Webpages / Andere Links zu externen Webseiten
http://www.humorcare.ch

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