

The Effectiveness of Dance Interventions on the Quality of Life of Adults Residing in Long-Term Care Facilities: A Systematic Review

Plain Language Summary

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Why this study was done:

This study was suggested and co-led by two members of the public over the age of 60 (*PC, LR*).

We suggested this project because we had benefited from exercise and dance programs and knew other older adults who felt their lives were also improved by dance and exercise programs. We had experience with family members living in long-term care homes. We wanted to know if research showed that dance programs improved the quality of life for people living in long-term care homes.

The question we asked:

Have studies shown that dance programs improve the quality of life for people over 60 years of age living in long-term care homes?

What we did:

We formed a team. Our team included:

Public and patient partners:

- PC and LR who suggested the study.
- EP and KS who have experience with dance, long-term care homes, and with using the health care system.

Researchers:

- HC, EM, professors with experience in research.
- AD, HS and MC, early career researchers.
- ZM, research assistant.

We did a “systematic review”. A systematic review aims to gather and summarize all studies that could help to answer a question. Team members used established methods to search for studies to include in the review. A librarian helped us with the search. We found 819 studies that might fit our needs. After carefully reviewing them, we found only 7 studies that had important points in common.

These seven studies:

- Involved people aged 60 and above living in long-term care.
- Measured quality of life.
- Compared changes in quality of life of people before and after the dance program, or the quality of life of people who took the program compared to similar people who did not take the program.

Then we looked at each study carefully to see:

- How each study was done.
- How well each study was done.
- What each study showed.

- Ideas about how the dance programs affected quality of life.

What we found:

The studies we relied on generally showed positive effects on quality of life. The studies were done in China, Korea, France, Malaysia, and the United States of America (USA).

What the studies had in common:

- Each study, except for the one in the USA, used culturally based dance.
- All dance programs were delivered in person, and as a group dance.
- All dance programs had a warm-up, dance portion and cool-down.
- The main dance activities included learning steps and movement routines – sometimes with paired or group movements.
- All dance sessions were led by experts or people who had been given some training to lead the dance sessions.
- Most studies included many more women than men, except one, where the numbers were equal.

What varied between studies:

- The number of people in the studies varied from 21 to 109.
- The dance programs varied in length between 6 weeks to 24 weeks.

Challenges:

- Few studies have been done.
- The methods of measuring quality of life were not all the same.
- Some dance programs were delivered for a short period of time.
- Some dance programs included very few people.
- Some of the studies were considered to be of lower quality because of the way the research was done.

The answer to our question:

The studies we looked at generally showed positive effects on quality of life. We also learned that more and better research is needed.

Moving forward:

We hope this review will spark interest in researchers and people who fund research to do more research on this topic. Managers and staff in Long-Term Care may consider the benefits of dance programs.