

THREE LITERATURE REVIEWS

Music, creative arts and the elderly

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MUSIC, DEMENTIA AND CARE OF THE ELDERLY THREE LITERATURE REVIEWS (from Nigel)

Music and the creative arts are the right of all, and may have a **positive impact on the growing challenges of human ageing, including disorders such as dementias**. Review A summarises the findings of the Mental Health Foundation UK's 2013 study *An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People*, the first literature review of its kind, which focuses on **mental and physical wellbeing** as well as the **community and social context**. Review B includes relevant sections of X-System's health review paper, which explores the **medical and healthcare perspective** and the applications of **music and creative arts therapies**. Studies A and B are followed by general and clinical bibliographies respectively. Review C is an overview of the most recent papers. For practical reasons, I have limited this to 2018. Synopses are included where available.

Review A: An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People

Mental wellbeing

- Increased confidence and self-esteem amongst participants were perceived benefits of participatory art engagement.
- There appears to be added value gained from performing to an audience across all art forms in terms of participants' feelings of accomplishment and the amount of positive feedback they receive.
- Through participatory art, older adults can embrace new and positive aspects to their identity and life role.
- Involvement in community arts initiatives may be particularly important in counterbalancing the mental wellbeing difficulties associated with periods of loss which can increase the risk of low mood, anxiety and social isolation.
- For older adults with dementia, participatory art can help improve cognitive functioning, communication, self-esteem, musical skills, pleasure, enjoyment of life, memory and creative thinking.
- Becoming involved in art activities can however cause frustration when individuals find that they are not able to meet their own expectations (or what they perceive to be others' expectations) of achieving a desired but unobtainable standard of artistic expression or skill.
- Through participatory art many individuals exceed their personal expectations about what they could achieve, which enhances their mental wellbeing.

Physical wellbeing

- Particular art forms may lend themselves more than others to significant **physical health improvements (such as cardio-vascular, joint mobility and breathing control)**, including dance, singing and playing musical instruments.
- The absorption of the creative processes involved in engaging with participatory arts that are not obviously physically exerting can lead to an **increase in the levels of general daily activity that older people undertake** which should have a positive effect on their physical wellbeing.



Communities

- There is clear evidence that participatory arts programmes provide **opportunities for meaningful social contact, friendship and support** within the art groups themselves as well as improving relationships between those living in care homes and prisons.
- Altruism, experienced through participatory art when it is used as a means of **‘giving something back’ to the community can have a positive impact on community beneficiaries as well as for the individuals participating in the art.**
- Participatory art that involves people with dementia accessing their community or interacting with professionals **serves to address age discrimination by raising awareness and expectations within the wider community** and can help to **break down stereotypes and reduce stigmatising attitudes and behaviour.**
- Participatory art that involves those with dementia along with their informal carers has proved to be an effective way of breaking down barriers in the relationship between those two groups. **Increased fellowship and raised expectations about the depth and quality of the care relationship can be achieved** and then reinforced in other areas of life.
- In day and residential care settings participatory art can **foster a better sense of social cohesion and community for those with dementia.**

Society

- Large scale, high profile festivals have the potential to **positively transform attitudes to older people**; particularly when intergenerational events are included in the festival.
- Participatory art is a powerful tool that **can contribute towards challenging and breaking down both the self and external stigmas of being older** that pervade popular societal culture.
- Participatory art can be used to **bring people together in a way that helps individuals in marginalised groups mitigate the negative effects of stigma and self-doubt on their wellbeing.**

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Review B: X-System literature review: a medical/ healthcare approach to the problems of ageing

CARE OF THE ELDERLY

Outcomes of using music and drama with groups of elderly patients have included improvements in cognitive and psychological well-being measures, word and listening recall, problem solving and self-esteem **(1)**. Work with movement, including tai chi, has brought significant improvements in physical functioning and ambulation, and borderline significant improvements in Sickness Impact Profile **(2)**.

Music therapy may serve as a valuable part of a combined treatment policy for the elderly **(3)**, and may be particularly effective in the treatment of alzheimers and related dementias. Musical memory usually remains intact in these conditions, and the experience of music may offer tangible benefits in quality of life, sense of self, sense of belonging and communication with others. It may also offer the opportunity for sufferers and caregivers to manage the agitation and disruption normal in the mid and late stages of disease **(4-12)**.

NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

Music may be helpful in dealing with the onset of neurological problems **(13)**, and valuable in the treatment of brain damage following head trauma, in particular in aphasia rehabilitation **(14)**. Melodic Intonation Therapy has proved especially effective in speech recovery for victims of accidents and strokes **(15-17)**.

Creative music therapy has been applied successfully to coma patients who were otherwise unresponsive **(18)**, and has proved to be an effective way of engaging adults with profound additional support needs **(19)**, through sensory exposure, temporal auditory structures, memory recall and cognitive sequencing **(20)**.

In certain phases of Parkinson's Disease, music interventions may bring "spectacular" results in improvement of gait and mobility **(21)**. These results are essentially temporary, but may persist beyond sessions and have a powerful impact on patient self-respect, empowerment and well-being. In general music is highly interactive with the motor cortex **(22)**, and may offer support to movement and motivation in general for older people including those with dementia.



MENTAL HEALTH

In general terms, creative arts interventions in mental healthcare may offer patients self-expression and ways of establishing communication with others **(23-25)**. These experiences may be either active, involving participation in creative activities **(26)**, or passive, involving looking, watching or listening **(27, 28)**. Arts interventions are particularly effective in preserving and maximising patients' sense of self **(29)**, in nurturing creativity, which is linked to some of the biological mechanisms of mental health **(30)**, and as a support to facilitate counselling **(31)**, which may be useful in earlier stages of dementia.

Creative writing, literature and poetry may help individuals organise and regain control over their own inner world, thus enhancing mental well-being **(32)**. There have been a number of approaches to the use of expressive and therapeutic writing in mental health care **(33)**, including developing personal narratives of mental illness which may help both patients and families **(34)**. These narratives may also give insight into how disease emerges and manifests itself, give hope where treatments have been successful **(35)**, and offer to staff a picture of the "whole person" **(36)**.

Therapeutic storytelling and poetry therapy may have positive clinical outcomes, possibly, among other reasons, because patients may project their experiences into the lives of others **(37)**. There is a need for more scientific research **(38)**, but in one study, guided reading resulted in significant reductions in levels of depression among patients **(39)**. There are arguments that the introduction of arts and humanities into the training and education of medical and nursing staff may support their understanding of the cultural, social, ethnic and economic factors influencing the behaviour of patients **(36)**.

Therapeutic theatre may have a positive effect on deficits in communication, cognition and social skills **(40)**, and drama therapy has proved effective in addressing the deeper psychological needs of people with dementia to express and understand their own world **(41)**, while the practice of drama itself may challenge the hierarchies of participants and promote empathy and understanding between patients, mental health carer students, and teachers alike **(42)**.

From the period of the 1920s and the pioneering work of Hans Prinzhorn and others, visual art has been used to help achieve personal expressiveness, to diagnose the psychiatric conditions of patients (through their own artwork) and to provide insights into the understanding of illnesses such as dementia **(43-46)**. Pictures and murals have been used in psychiatric units to calming effect, for example in the care of dementia, where significant decreases in patient agitation have been recorded **(47)**.

Social dance may support spontaneous activity and enhance physical mobility **(48)**. Studies have shown that dance in dementia care creates a supportive environment and helps patients achieve a state of independence **(49,50)**. Singing has been shown to increase the quality of life for people with progressive dementia, to provide comfort and awareness, inclusion of people from different social and cultural backgrounds **(51,52)**, increase verbal communication, stimulate collaboration in day-to-day tasks, improve mood

and reduce agitation **(53)**. The fact that musical memory normally remains largely intact in Alzheimers and related dementias **(54)** means that carers may provide valuable therapeutic effects by singing familiar tunes during daily routines **(55,56)**, and that patients may, through singing, improve faculties such as face-name recognition **(53,57)**. In Alzheimers treatment, familiar music from the past lives of patients has stimulated long-term memory, encouraged positive behaviour **(58)**, prompted recall of personal history, and brought increased levels of alertness and happiness **(59,60)**.

Reviews of literature in the area of arts and mental health suggest that music is one of the most useful tools available to care givers, and may play a vital role in helping to deal with the behavioural problems of mental health and dementia patients, including eating and sleeping patterns, memory loss and other disorders **(61)**. Listening to music may bring significant decreases in agitated behaviour, and the effect may last for an hour after the listening experience **(62-64)**. Preferred music is particularly effective (except in cases of severe dementia) **(65)** and may significantly reduce aggressive behaviour. In one study 80% of patients showed significant decreases in aggressive behaviour and increased cooperation with caregivers **(66)**. Improvements have been recorded in sleeping patterns **(67)**, in mental health rehabilitation where music has been used as a complement to medication **(68,69)**, in anxiety levels and communication **(70)**, and in social functions among Alzheimers patients **(71,72)**.

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REVIEW C: Recent publications (2016)

1.

[The Long Journey of Alzheimer's Disease.](#)

Kennison M, Long E.

J Christ Nurs. 2018 Oct/Dec;35(4):218-227. doi: 10.1097/CNJ.0000000000000529.

PMID: 30198999

2.

[Use of parametric speaker for older people with dementia in a residential care setting: A preliminary study of two cases.](#)

Nishiura Y, Hoshiyama M, Konagaya Y.

Hong Kong J Occup Ther. 2018 Jun;31(1):30-35. doi: 10.1177/1569186118759611. Epub 2018 Mar 23.

PMID: 30186084

3.

[Psychological and Mnemonic Benefits of Nostalgia for People with Dementia.](#)

Ismail S, Christopher G, Dodd E, Wildschut T, Sedikides C, Jones RW, Noonan KA, Tingley D, Cheston R.

J Alzheimers Dis. 2018 Aug 20. doi: 10.3233/JAD-180075. [Epub ahead of print]

PMID: 30149444

4.

[Do Reports on Personal Preferences of Persons with Dementia Predict Their Responses to Group Activities?](#)

Cohen-Mansfield J.

Dement Geriatr Cogn Disord. 2018 Aug 24;46(1-2):100-108. doi: 10.1159/000491746. [Epub ahead of print]

PMID: 30145591

5.

["Opening Our Time Capsule"-Creating an Individualized Music and Other Memory Cues Database to Promote Communication Between Spouses and People With Dementia During Visits to a Nursing Home.](#)

Dassa A.

Front Med (Lausanne). 2018 Jul 31;5:215. doi: 10.3389/fmed.2018.00215. eCollection 2018.

PMID: 30131960

6.

[Community-Dwelling People Living With Dementia and Their Family Caregivers Experience Enhanced Relationships and Feelings of Well-Being Following Therapeutic Group Singing: A Qualitative Thematic Analysis.](#)

Clark IN, Tamplin JD, Baker FA.

Front Psychol. 2018 Jul 30;9:1332. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01332. eCollection 2018.

PMID: 30104994 [Free PMC Article](#)

7.

[Importance of music in biographies of people with dementia.](#)

Dahms R, Haesner M.

Adv Gerontol. 2018;31(2):285-292.

PMID: 30080338

[Similar articles](#)

J Christ Nurs. 2018 Oct/Dec;35(4):218-227. doi: 10.1097/CNJ.0000000000000529.

The Long Journey of Alzheimer's Disease.

Kennison M1, Long E.

Abstract

The growing elderly population is creating record numbers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease (AD) and other dementias. Nursing has an unprecedented opportunity to rethink how we care for adults with dementia, reduce the burden of caregivers, and preserve the personhood of patients. This article reviews AD and dementia pathophysiology, history, screening, stigma, treatments and interventions, and caregiver support. A nurse's journey with her mother with AD imparts the meaning of patient dignity.

Hong Kong J Occup Ther. 2018 Jun;31(1):30-35. doi: 10.1177/1569186118759611. Epub 2018 Mar 23.

Use of parametric speaker for older people with dementia in a residential care setting: A preliminary study of two cases.

Nishiura Y1, Hoshiyama M2, Konagaya Y3.

Abstract

OBJECTIVE/BACKGROUND:

Older people with dementia often show behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia such as agitation, aggression, and depression that affect their activities of daily living, and hence reduce the quality of life of their caregivers. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of a new technological intervention—a parametric speaker, creating a narrow personal acoustic environment, which may reduce the manifestation of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia symptoms.

METHODS:

A parametric speaker was placed on the ceiling of a large day room, and personally selected pieces of music were provided in a narrow space just under the speaker during the intervention. Two older residents with behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia participated in the experiment.

RESULTS:

Playing pieces of favorite music via the parametric speaker decreased their behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia during the intervention. In addition, this intervention reduced the burden on caregivers. One of the advantages of using parametric speaker was being able to create a personal space in a common room.

CONCLUSION:

We considered that the parametric speaker might be useful to reduce behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia and the burden on caregivers, providing individualized rehabilitation for the improved quality of life of residents.

Psychological and Mnemonic Benefits of Nostalgia for People with Dementia.

[Ismail S](#), [Christopher G](#), [Dodd E](#), [Wildschut T](#), [Sedikides C](#), [Jones RW](#), [Noonan KA](#), [Tingley D](#), [Cheston R](#).

Abstract

BACKGROUND:

Studies with non-clinical populations show that nostalgia increases psychological resources, such as self-esteem and social connectedness.

OBJECTIVES:

Our objectives were to find out if the benefits of nostalgia in non-clinical populations generalize to people with dementia and if nostalgia facilitates recall of dementia-related information.

METHODS:

All three experiments recruited participants with mild or moderate levels of dementia. Experiment 1 tested whether nostalgia (compared to control) enhances psychological resources among 27 participants. Experiment 2 used music to induce nostalgia (compared to control) in 29 participants. Experiment 3 compared recall for self-referent dementia statements among 50 participants randomized to either a nostalgia or control condition. Findings across experiments were synthesized with integrative data analysis.

RESULTS:

Nostalgia (compared to control) significantly increased self-reported social connectedness, meaning in life, self-continuity, optimism, self-esteem, and positive (but not negative) affect (Experiments 1-3). Compared to controls, nostalgic participants also recalled significantly more self-referent dementia-related information (Experiment 3).

CONCLUSION:

This series of experiments extends social psychological research with non-clinical populations into dementia care, providing evidence that nostalgia significantly enhances psychological resources. The finding that nostalgia increased recall of self-referent statements about dementia suggests that this emotion lends participants the fortitude to face the threat posed by their illness. The finding has potentially important clinical implications both for the development of reminiscence therapy and for facilitating adjustment to a diagnosis of dementia.

Do Reports on Personal Preferences of Persons with Dementia Predict Their Responses to Group Activities?

[Cohen-Mansfield J](#).

Abstract

BACKGROUND:

We examine the utility of individualizing activities for persons with dementia (PwD) on the basis of congruence with preferences. Previous studies demonstrated only limited evidence of individualization of activity content to improve response, tended not to consider group activities, or were inconclusive.

METHODS:

Participants were 90 PwD residing in a nursing home or attending a day center. After family and staff caregivers rated preferences for music, exercise, reading, brain games, and baking, group activities were conducted, and the impact on mood and engagement was monitored. We tested whether participants showed more engagement and better mood when group activities were related to topics they liked, in comparison to topics they did not like (within-person analysis), and whether persons who liked certain topics showed better outcomes in comparison to persons who did not like those topics (between-person analyses).

RESULTS:

Within-person analysis found a relationship between the report of liking the topic and engagement and mood during the group activity, confirming the benefit of individualizing activities to persons' preferences. Between-person analyses were statistically significant only when based on staff preference ratings.

CONCLUSION:

Despite the fact that each topic represents a wide range of possible activities, individualizing group activities based on participants' preferences can optimize the impact.

"Opening Our Time Capsule"-Creating an Individualized Music and Other Memory Cues Database to Promote Communication Between Spouses and People With Dementia During Visits to a Nursing Home.

Dassa A1.

Author information

Abstract

Background: Family members play a critical role in caring for people with dementia, and their involvement in care continues even after their loved ones are placed in long-term care facilities. The dynamics of family involvement following institutionalization are complex and challenging. The strain on caregivers does not cease and communication difficulties are a major barrier due to deteriorating language abilities as a result of dementia. Also, caregivers' involvement has implications on the quality of life of both the older adult and his family members. **Objective:** To help alleviate caregivers' burden during visiting hours, by promoting communication opportunities. The program included the creation of an individualized database using personal music and photos that present life episodes. **Methods:** A qualitative research was used to explore spouses' experience during visits and the process of creating and using the individualized database. Participants included three women who regularly visited their partners who had dementia and resided in a nursing home. The first phase included creating an individualized database for each couple. In the second phase, four meetings were conducted, each woman with her partner, utilizing the database on a tablet. A case study research design was used and various types of data were collected and analyzed. The data included interview reports (pre-post intervention), preparation meetings reports, spouses' recorded reactions at the end of each of the four visits, and the music therapist's written log during the program. **Results:** All documented data revealed the difficulties, mostly the communication barrier, encountered by the three women during their visits to the nursing home. All reported that using the individualized database helped them to find ways to communicate with their partners, relive shared past experiences, and alleviate the stress and feelings of disconnection during visits. **Conclusions:** Forming a bridge between past and present via individualized music and photos databases can be helpful in bridging the gap between people with dementia in nursing homes and their family members.

Community-Dwelling People Living With Dementia and Their Family Caregivers Experience Enhanced Relationships and Feelings of Well-Being Following Therapeutic Group Singing: A Qualitative Thematic Analysis.

Clark IN1, Tamplin JD1, Baker FA1.

Author information

Abstract

The progression of dementia can severely compromise interpersonal connection and relationship quality between people living with dementia (PwD) and their family caregivers (FCG), leading to social isolation and poor quality of life for both. Therapeutic group singing (TGS) is a socially engaging, stimulating, and supportive pursuit that community-dwelling PwD and their FCG can participate in together. This study aimed to build on the findings from previous research by undertaking a thematic analysis of interviews with nine PwD (five women, four men; mean age = 79.1 years) and nine FCG (five women, four men; mean age = 75.7 years). The interviews explored participants' perspectives and experiences of a 20-week TGS intervention, underpinned by Kitwood's model of person-centered care. Inductive thematic analysis resulted in the emergence of five themes which described how TGS for PwD and their FCG: (1) included supportive therapeutic facilitation and design features; (2) made group singing more accessible; (3) fostered new empathic friendships; (4) enhanced relationships between PwD and FCG; and (5) led to personal feelings of wellbeing for both PwD and FCG. Affinity with others who had similar life experiences and challenges created a sense of mutual understanding and camaraderie, which made group singing accessible without fear of judgment and social stigmas. For some PwD/FCG dyads, TGS meant they could continue a lifelong passion for singing together, while others enjoyed participating in singing together for the first time. Both PwD and FCG participants described personal feelings of acceptance, improved social confidence, mood, and purpose. Further, participants valued mental stimulation from TGS such as learning new skills and memory support. A model explaining relationships between themes suggests that TGS with person-centered facilitation features for PwD/FCG dyads led to affinity among group members with ripple effects, which enhanced accessibility to group singing, the formation of empathic friendships, PwD/FCG relationship quality, and personal wellbeing for both PwD and FCG. Psychoemotional, social and cognitive benefits from TGS described by participants in this study are known to promote self-identity, healthy relationships, and quality of life. This research highlights a need for improved availability of TGS for community-dwelling PwD/FCG dyads.

Importance of music in biographies of people with dementia.

Dahms R1, Haesner M1.

Author information

Abstract in **English**, [Russian](#)

Recent research on music and music-based interventions for people with dementia (PwD) is focused on changes of psychological and cognitive functions. Little is known about the role of biography in the importance of music to PwD. A qualitative study was conducted to identify the phases of their life in which PwD were influenced by music. 20 semi-structured interviews with PwD from nursing homes and PwD cared for at home were conducted. Additionally, their relatives were interviewed separately. The results were analysed relating to four categories divided into past and present with the aim of identifying the changes in daily routine and challenges for everyday care. First access to music and education mostly were built in the family setting. Social participation e.g. music activities, listening to music and playing instruments changed dramatically with the onset of dementia. Moreover, PwD generally needed assistance in participating in those activities. The dependency on their caregivers and inability to express their needs leads to a daily routine without music. There is a need of trained professionals motivating and assisting PwD to attend musical activities. In addition, care homes should offer more music activities and music therapy for PwD with various stages of dementia. Moreover, care institutions should implement music questionnaire in the patient's file regarding musical preferences.