



Creative movement classes to music in a residential aged care facility



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The creative movement/dance project was devised to develop and measure the effects of a 14 week program in a rural aged care facility. This small scale study successfully completed a movement program to music which maintained a good attendance rate throughout the duration of the program. It is one of a growing number of studies doing research in the new but growing field encompassing "arts in health".

A local residential aged care facility was recruited and willing participants took part in a weekly movement class to music. Hostel residents who were considered to be at risk for deteriorating mobility were actively targeted by the staff of the facility and encouraged to participate. A group of 17 completed the class with pre and post assessment data being collated. Quantitative measurements before and after the program were recorded, for balance using the Tinetti balance scale; for functional mobility using the "Timed up and Go" (TUG) and for psychological well being, using the "geriatric depression scale", (GDS 15). At the post assessment session, all participants were invited to comment on their overall impression of the program and asked whether they would like to continue.

Results from both the Tinetti and the TUG tests revealed that there were fewer people in the high risk categories for falls after the intervention period. Results from the GDS tests revealed that there were fewer people in the "mod to severe" range after the intervention, and more people in the "normal range". While trends were positive, they were not statistically significant using a Wilcoxon signed rank sum test.

Fifteen of the seventeen stated that they would continue if given the opportunity, and this included one participant of the three who could not remember doing them.

This study successfully devised a creative movement program which was accessible to elderly residents with few options for physical activity. The importance of having an experienced practitioner to establish such a program is discussed. Limitations in research design are identified and suggestions for future research directions are expanded in the full report. Despite the lack of a statistically significant result, the experience of the project was a positive one for residents and staff alike.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Rachel is a physiotherapist with over twenty years of clinical experience in a wide range of settings. Her interest in dance has always been present and she completed a BA in Dance in 1998. She enjoys exploring the region of overlap between the two disciplines. She currently works as a physiotherapist at Eurobodalla Community Health and dances when she can.



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