



## DANCE: A THERAPEUTIC RESOURCE IN THE THIRD AGE

### A DANÇA: UM RECURSO TERAPÊUTICO NA TERCEIRA IDADE

### DANZA: UN RECURSO TERAPÉUTICO EN LA TERCERA EDAD

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** assessing the dance as a therapeutic resource for a group of seniors. **Method:** a descriptive study of a qualitative approach. Participants were 12 elderly who attended the Community Center for seniors in the city of Campo Maior (PI). After production of data there were analyzed and grouped by semantic similarities. The study had the research project approved by the Research Ethics Committee, Protocol: 25899213.3.0000.5211. **Results:** through the research five categories emerged: 1. Physical aspect of dance design; Contribution of dance in social networking, 2. Collaboration of dance with self-image, 3. Collaboration of dance in psycho-affective interaction and 4. View of the elder before dance. **Conclusion:** the data revealed how dance is important for the physical, social and psychological development of the elderly as well, raising the self-esteem and their quality of life. **Descriptors:** Elderly; Centers for Living and Leisure; Self-esteem.

#### RESUMO

**Objetivos:** avaliar a dança como recurso terapêutico para um grupo de idosos. **Método:** estudo descritivo, com abordagem qualitativa. Os participantes foram 12 idosos que frequentam o Centro de Convivência da terceira idade na cidade de Campo Maior (PI). Após a produção de dados os mesmos foram analisados e agrupados por similaridades semânticas. O estudo teve o projeto de pesquisa aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa, protocolo 25899213.3.0000.5211. **Resultados:** no desenvolvimento da pesquisa emergiram cinco categorias: 1. Concepção do aspecto físico da dança, Contribuição da dança no relacionamento social, 2. Colaboração da dança na autoimagem, 3. Colaboração da dança na interação psicoafetiva e 4. Visão do idoso antes da dança. **Conclusão:** Os dados revelaram o quanto a dança é importante para o desenvolvimento físico, social e psicológico dos idosos, bem como, a elevação da autoestima, e qualidade de vida dos mesmos. **Descritores:** Idosos; Centros e Convivência e Lazer; Autoestima.

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivos:** evaluar la danza como un recurso terapéutico para un grupo de personas mayores. **Método:** este es un estudio descriptivo con enfoque cualitativo. Los participantes fueron 12 señiores que asisten a las personas mayores del Centro Comunitario de la Ciudad de Campo Mayor (PI). Después de la producción de los datos, que fueron analizados y agrupados por similitudes semánticas. El estudio tuvo el proyecto de investigación aprobado por el Comité de Ética en la Investigación, Protocolo 25899213.3.0000.5211. **Resultados:** en el desarrollo de la investigación surgieron cinco categorías: 1. Concepción del aspecto físico de la danza, La contribución de baile en las relaciones sociales, 2. Colaboración de la danza en la autoimagen, 3. Colaboración de la danza in el relacionamiento psicoafetivo y 4. Visión de los idosos antes del baile. **Conclusión:** los datos revelaron cómo el baile es importante para el desarrollo físico, social y psicológico de las personas mayores, así, elevar la autoestima y calidad de vida para ellos. **Descriptor:** Ancianos; Centros para la Vida y el Ocio; Autoestima.

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## INTRODUCTION

Aging presents itself as a natural phase in the life of every living being, especially in humans. It is a dynamic and progressive process, in which there are morphological, functional, biochemical and psychological changes that determine loss of the individual's ability to adapt to the environment, causing greater vulnerability and higher incidence of pathological processes that eventually lead him to death.<sup>1</sup>

The illnesses which affect the elderly are the psychological calls, as more than 50% of the population has some mood disorder and depression which appears as the great villain of these disorders and can be a gateway to other pathologies, as stands out for depressed mood and a great feeling of sadness and hopelessness.<sup>2</sup>

Depressive disorders affect the autonomy and causes disability in the elderly, increasing the number of hospitalizations and mortality. The most feared complication is suicide. Thus, it is of great importance a detailed assessment for a reliable diagnosis of this pathology.<sup>3</sup>

Aging is often seen as a negative period in one's life, this feels helpless and vulnerable to various diseases such as infections or accidents that they endanger the health of the elderly. Thus, many seniors end up isolated, depressed and prone to chronic and degenerative diseases.<sup>4</sup>

Due to the problems that affect the lives of the elderly, it is important that they practice an activity to develop their physical, social, psychological and cultural aspect. So the dance is quoted as an activity that addresses all of these aspects, because with it the old moves the whole body, interacts harmoniously with the group, generating a psychological well-being, from emotions that are unspoken shaped words, so it is seen by some scholars as the unspeakable expression. Given these benefits, the dance stands out as an effective therapeutic tool in rescuing the quality of life for seniors.<sup>5</sup>

The study is justified by adding knowledge of the research topic and contributes to further studies in the field of psychology, occupational therapy and physical education. It also allows, expand studies in gerontology in relation to the subjective and psychological aspects of the elderly, as well as the psychosocial and emotional reactions. So it started with the following guiding question, it was << What are the benefits of dance in the lives of seniors participating in the Community

Center? >> To answer it was drawn the following objective:

- Assessing dance as a therapeutic resource for a group of seniors and identify the psychoaffective interactions.

## METHOD

This is a descriptive, field and qualitative analysis, with the data collection tool to semi-structured interview. The original sample had a total of twelve participants, eight women and four men, which all share the dance group Living Center.

The survey was conducted in a Community Center for the Elderly in the city of Campo Maior, Piauí (Brazil) which develops physical activities, recreational, cultural, and on Fridays offers a dance evening with live sound; promoting better quality of life for the elderly.

Data collection procedures, there was first requested a statement from the Social Center of the Third Age (CCTI), through an application, allowing access to the activities and site users. Then the project was submitted to Brazil platform and the appreciation of the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Faculty Integral Differential - FACID DeVry Brazil, as required by Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council (CAAE: 25899213.3.0000.5211).

Participants then underwent the interviews after reading and signing the Informed Consent (IC). The duration of each interview was of approximately thirty (30) minutes held within the institution. The reports were transcribed own hand, where it respected the opinions of respondents and each participant was chosen a fictitious name in order to preserve the identity of the elderly.

Data were analyzed by content analysis technique, categorized based on the reports of the participants. Respondents were identified by codenames to ensure the preservation of identities and the maintenance of secrecy around the information and experiences reported.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To introduce the subject, there was drawn in Figure 1.

| Fictitious name | Sex    | Age (in years) | Schooling     |
|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------------|
| Betânia         | Female | 66             | Illiterate    |
| Paula           | Female | 60             | Gymnasium     |
| Fernando        | Male   | 63             | Illiterate    |
| Vitória         | Female | 62             | Primary       |
| Morgana         | Female | 70             | Supplementary |
| Amarildo        | Male   | 65             | Illiterate    |
| Júlia           | Female | 69             | Illiterate    |
| Cláudia         | Female | 71             | Illiterate    |
| Roberto         | Male   | 73             | Elementary    |
| Berna           | Female | 66             | Illiterate    |
| Amélia          | Female | 60             | Illiterate    |
| Otávio          | Male   | 69             | Elementary    |

**Figure 1.** Profile of the participants of the survey about the fictitious name, gender, age and educational level. Teresina (PI), 2014.

The responses of participants were analyzed and arranged according to the

nature of the design of each subject and so divided as viewed in Figure 2.

| Categories                                      | Subcategories                        |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Design of the physical aspect of dance          | Psychological aspect of dance        |
| Contribution of dance in social relationships   | Change in mood and in communication  |
| Collaboration of dance on self-image            | Improvement of the self-esteem       |
| Collaboration of dance in the socio interaction | Experience about sexuality           |
| View for the elderly before the dance           | Feelings experienced after the dance |

**Figure 2.** Categories and subcategories. Teresina (PI), 2014.

◆ **Conception of dance for the elderly**

In this category the elderly showed that dancing is a physical activity that develops the limbs (arms and legs), helps in reducing muscle and bone pain.

*[...] I have arthritis, osteoarthritis and parrot's beak, but the dance gives me health and peace [...]* (Julia)

*[...] Dance is an important physical activity; it is good for health, develops the whole body [...]* (Amarildo)

*[...] It is an activity that activates my muscles, my bones, my whole body [...]* (Morgana)

It is observed in lines that dance provides the elderly greater motor skills. This activity, to be pleasurable, increased physical conditioning, thus reducing the diseases of age.

◆ **Psychological aspects of dance**

The dance helps the elderly to develop coordination, agility, improves body image, intelligence, enabling an improvement in self-esteem and the minimization of various psychological problems; it also allows a form of healthy living, increasing the role of social relations, leisure and health.<sup>6</sup>

*[...] Dance is a fun, a therapy for the mind and body. It is good for the spirit [...]* (Paula)

*[...] It is an activity that distracts the mind and makes one forget what is bad [...]* (Berna)

*[...] Dance is good for the body, health and soul. It is a distraction [...]* (Amélia)

The dance moves express stories, emotions and experiences its actions range from free, simple and spontaneous movements, to more elaborate choreography, which are passed from generation to generation, telling the story of a people, or the movement itself that symbolizes the content a music.<sup>7</sup>

What was verbalized by the elderly shows that dance for them is perceived as a physical action activity, social and psychological, for while the individual develops motor skills, muscle coordination, balance skills and also develops the psychological part, as we have seen the word "distraction" in the dictionary means "recreation, fun".<sup>8</sup>

◆ **Contribution of dance in social relationships**

This category concerns how dance helps seniors to broaden and strengthen social ties and relationships.

*[...] I love playing with colleagues, the respect that everyone has for me. When not think with whom to dance, I dance alone. The important thing is to be happy [...]* (Claudia)

*[...] I love friendships, living together with friends, the love they have for me. Have peace here much more than in my own home [...]* (Vitória)

Dance can be understood as an activity that the elderly expresses its communication through the body's own expression, express their emotions and intimate feelings. This practice provides many benefits in motor control and especially in strengthening the

emotional aspect, helping to improve interpersonal relationships, friendships and affections.<sup>9</sup>

#### ◆ Change in mood and communication

The change of mood revealed in form of happiness, laughter and moments of pleasure.

*[...] I like everything, everything. I feel comfortable with my friends, my beloved, my family's heart. Being here I'm happy, relaxed do not remember what is bad. It's like you were in heaven [...]* (Júlia)

*[...] Here I feel happy, cheerful, talk to one and other, give a good laugh. Friendships are ten; everyone is respected, having fun. "Love" is what everyone should do [...]* (Paula).

The dance has great importance in the adjustment of personal and interpersonal relationships of the elderly, which helps to strengthen the bonds of friendship, feelings, mood, self-esteem and detachment of the concerns, anxieties and negative thoughts.

The elderly practitioners of physical exercises in groups show is open, humorous and psychologically balanced for individuals, group, life, for socialization contributes to personal identity and a good quality of life.<sup>10</sup>

#### ◆ Collaboration of dance on self-image

In this category it was found that the dance group contributed positively to the change in self-concept and self-image in oneself.

Good physical activity can significantly improve the elderly's life satisfaction, increased self-efficacy in self-concept and self-image. It also helps in increasing the ability to cope with stress, tension of everyday life, anxiety and depression.<sup>11</sup>

*[...] On Friday I wake me early (tie up), I put a nice cloth. I am powerful, I take my old and come have fun, live and he does not come I come only [...]* (Amélia)

*[...] I was always sad, lonely working. Today, earring, have friendships, love. 'm Beautiful, strong and happy [...]* (Roberto)

*[...] When I come all lovely, all eyes stops on me, hug me and want to dance with me [...]* (Vitória)

The body of the old image, as well as his self-assessment, is influenced positively if it has an active social life, is able to make decisions and to perform activities beyond their conditions as well as the personal care, with food, toiletries, etc.<sup>7</sup>

#### ◆ Self-esteem improvement

In connection with this sub-category is observed in the speech of all respondents that dancing is an activity that provides an increase significantly in the self-esteem of older people and develops positively the

concept of self-image, love themselves, self-confidence, essential conditions to improve the appreciation of him.

*[...] The dance was the best thing that happened in my life. I tidy, I paint, I feel the happiest person in the world, beautiful, younger. Happy. [...]* (Betânia)

*[...] I hope all week to get to Friday. I wake up early bath me, perfume me, me dick. I've been pretty and perky dance with all my colleagues and when I do not find someone to dance, I dance alone. What matters is to be happy, it's all good [...]* (Cláudia)

On the above lines, we can see that dance was the activity responsible for the rescue the self-esteem of all survey participants and today, they can be seen as producers of their own personal growth and collective individuals, give them pleasure for live longer and better.

The leisure activity develops motivation and socialization of the elderly, increases their self-esteem and provides a sense of self-efficacy. So it keeps in high self-esteem and positive self-concept.<sup>7</sup>

#### ◆ Psychoaffective Interaction

This category is characterized by relations of affection and friendship, referring to the coexistence of relationships in the group, providing the elderly, smiling, playing, dancing, singing and other experiences that make flow the feeling repressed, giving way to joy and relaxation. Eliminating the anxieties, fears and sorrows.

*[...] The dance brings me joy, satisfaction. Love and friendship [...]* (Fernando)

*[...] With dance I forget the sorrows and have only joy in talking with friends [...]* (Morgana)

*[...] I like the friends and girlfriends, I feel happy and loved [...]* (Otávio)

The dance features six functions, major as self-expression, communicability, fun and enjoyment, cultural characterization, social revitalization and spirituality. It also has strong motivating power whether practiced alone or in pairs, are elderly, adult or child, man or woman. It is an activity practiced for life.<sup>12</sup>

#### ◆ Experience of sexuality

Sexuality appears in the speech of elderly and are experienced through eyes, body movements and the presence of dating.

Sexuality is characterized as the individual so that a person is expressed as experiencing his experiences as male or female, expressed by gestures, postures, walking ways, way of speaking, of dressing, of ornaments, perfume or varied details and accessories. All this includes sexuality, not only the component of



sexual practices, but also exchange of looks, smells, sensual gestures, sounds, touch, caress, among others.<sup>13</sup>

[...] *It's fun. I come here to dance, shimmy me and flirt. The dance is a relaxation in the body, warms the blood and I feel like a 15 year old [...]* (Amarildo)

[...] *Dancing makes me younger, changed my world, I dance with my husband, dating, kiss. I feel like a 18 year old girl [...]* (Amelia)

[...] *Everyone here calls me "cruel" if the girls give silly I dance, I dance, hug and ends out dating. So I'm not alone. 'm Alive [...]* (Roberto)

[...] *Dance makes me brand new; I came to know what love is. I found a great companion dating to 3 years. My life is all good! [...]* (Berna)

It is observed in the texts above that older people experience their sexuality in their own way, which is demonstrated in the body, in looks, gestures and love affairs that make them feel like real teenagers. Starting from the cultural historical perspective, the sexual life of the elderly can be understood and accepted as a dynamic process, realized with some contradictions in an experience full of meaning and individual's own meanings, signaling a singularity in their activities, expressions and experiences during life.<sup>13</sup>

The expressions of affection, costumes, and the desire to seduce and be seduced are present in the lives of young people but also in the lives of seniors, and they can think of love as libidinal transformation, such as tenderness, physical contact, looks etc. They can reinvent many loving ways. And the prejudice that suggests that menopause in women and andropause in men is that they are responsible for sexual problems in old age.<sup>14</sup>

◆ **View of the elder before the dance**

This category refers to the form of how the elderly could be seen before entering the dance group, which showed moments of sadness, abandonment, capital loss, pain and depression.

[...] *I was a sad person, down, unwilling to live or to enjoy myself, my life was difficult. I had no friends [...]* (Paula)

[...] *Do not leave home. Hated, I had no friends. It was only despair [...]* (Amélia)

[...] *It was sad. Depressed, I cried a lot and took many medicines [...]* (Berna)

[...] *I felt very sick, old lady, alone and stressed [...]* (Julia)

Before participating in the dance group, the seniors had much commitment to the physical and emotional health, were taking several medications, were stressed by staying

at home taking care of grandchildren and did not have a moment of pleasure, a way to alleviate the problems of day by day, so they felt neglected, lonely and susceptible to many diseases.

Dance is one of the best therapeutic activities for the elderly, it serves to establish the quality of life for the elderly; it is, perhaps, the most complete activity, be able to offer the elderly maintain muscle strength, balance, body movements and reflexes of the mind; can provide the elderly discover their potential articulation and exercise the members in a pleasant way, vent their feelings and their emotions, using their own body.<sup>15</sup>

◆ **Feelings experienced after dancing**

After participating in the group, their speeches reveal a reverse aspect to the former. What does state that the dance contributed to a major change in behavior, attitudes and health of all respondents aged.

[...] *Hundred percent improved relationships with family and friends, I am calmer, I feel more relaxed and happier [...]* (Paula)

[...] *I see people. I have the most joyful heart. I have friends and entertainment [...]* (Amélia)

[...] *I forgot the sorrows; I am no longer alone, now take only one medicine. I am well, very well so [...]* (Bern)

[...] *I feel happy, with health and peace. I do not feel lonely [...]* (Julia)

The quality of life of the elderly is related to actions of everyday life, nutritional food, that is, the physical, social and mental food, such as talking, walking, reading a good book, crossword puzzles, songs and dance. These activities develop in the elderly group in Living Centers enable to restore affection, self-esteem, self-concept and also helps to return to work activities.

CONCLUSION

Dance was considered an important activity for all respondents of the Community Center by providing them with muscle power to perform day-to-day, helped build a good image of themselves, contributing to the development of self and personal interactions and healthy interpersonal.

This study made it possible to observe how the dance is important in the lives of seniors participating in the Community Center Senior Citizens, because this activity is not linked only to the physical structure such as strengthening muscles, enrichment of the joints or even prevention and control diseases such as arthritis, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis,

etc. But mainly the dance group help build the elderly love, improvement in self, with self-image that was lost.

Dance is a therapeutic resource, as was apparent in the speeches, the facial gestures of the elderly, joy, liveliness, love each other, respect and well-being of satisfaction is contagious for all participants. It has been seen that dance invigorates the sexuality of the elderly subject still taboo especially in old age where young people deny or even repugnant. Some of them reported that the dance group led courtships, marriages and restoration of the sexual experience.

After attending the dance group, the elderly rescued a pleasant social relationship, healthy and respectful, among the participants of the Center and also with their families, which makes ease the loneliness, physical inactivity, isolation and mental illness, opportunistic lack of love and self-esteem.

This study can provide contributions to psychology, society and expands the scientific studies on the subject, and may assist in the implementation and development of public policy projects related to seniors and the best quality of life in the past life cycles.

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