

NOTE PREVIEW ARTICLE

**BALLROOM DANCE FOR THE ELDERLY: HEALTH EDUCATION STRATEGY**  
**DANÇA DE SALÃO PARA IDOSOS: ESTRATÉGIA DE EDUCAÇÃO EM SAÚDE**  
**DANZA DE SALÓN PARA LOS ANCIANOS: ESTRATEGIA DE EDUCACIÓN EN SALUD**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** to report the experience of developing ballroom dance workshops associated with actions in health education and healthy aging. **Method:** descriptive, experience-report type study, of an extension project developed in the curriculum of a subject of the post-graduate course. **Results:** five workshops were carried out. In the first workshop, there was an initial diagnosis from the demands arising and the questionnaire of functional clinical Vulnerability Index. The following themes were addressed: benefits of ballroom dance, memory and healthy eating. Every moment of education synchronized music and dance and was followed by the practical dancing lessons. The participants' age (n=33) varied from 51 to 80 years, with 76% aged over 60 years and 90.9% women. **Conclusion:** the union of ballroom dance and education as one values the participation of elderly people as active figures in their sociocultural context and can become a powerful strategy to promote active aging. **Descriptors:** Healthy Aging; Health Promotion; Nursing Care; Education; Leisure Activities; Community Health Nursing.

**RESUMO**

**Objetivo:** relatar a experiência de desenvolvimento da oficina de dança de salão associada às ações de educação em saúde e envelhecimento saudável. **Método:** trata-se de estudo descritivo, tipo relato de experiência, de um projeto de extensão desenvolvido na grade curricular de uma disciplina do curso de pós-graduação. **Resultados:** realizaram-se cinco oficinas. Realizou-se, na primeira oficina, um diagnóstico inicial a partir das demandas surgidas e no questionário de Índice de Vulnerabilidade clínico funcional. Trataram-se os temas: benefícios da dança de salão, memória e alimentação saudável. Sincronizaram-se, em cada momento educativo, música e dança, e seguiu-se das aulas práticas de dança. Constatou-se que a idade dos participantes (n=33) variou de 51 a 80 anos, 76% sendo com mais de 60 anos e 90,9% sendo mulheres. **Conclusão:** destaca-se que a união da dança de salão e da educação como um só valoriza a participação do idoso como figura ativa em seu contexto sociocultural e pode transformar-se uma potente estratégia para promover o envelhecimento ativo. **Descritores:** Envelhecimento Saudável; Promoção da Saúde; Cuidado de Enfermagem; Educação; Atividades de Lazer; Enfermagem em Saúde Comunitária.

**RESUMEN**

**Objetivo:** reportar la experiencia de desarrollo de talleres de danza de salón asociadas a las acciones de educación en salud y envejecimiento saludable. **Método:** se realizó un estudio descriptivo, del tipo relato de experiencia, de un proyecto de extensión, desarrollado en el programa de estudios de una disciplina del curso de posgrado. **Resultados:** se realizaron cinco talleres. El primer taller fue un diagnóstico inicial de las demandas surgidas y un cuestionario clínico funcional del Índice de Vulnerabilidad. Se abordaron los temas: beneficios de la danza de salón, memoria y nutrición saludable. Cada momento de la educación sincronizó música y danza y fue seguido por las enseñanzas prácticas de la danza. La edad de los participantes (n=33) varió de 51 a 80 años, el 76% con más de 60 años y el 90,9% son mujeres. **Conclusión:** la unión de danza de salón y educación como una sola valorizó la participación de los ancianos como figura activa en su contexto sociocultural y puede convertirse en una poderosa estrategia para promover el envejecimiento activo. **Descriptores:** Envejecimiento Saludable; Promoción de la Salud; Atención de Enfermería; Educación; Actividades Recreativas; Enfermería en Salud Comunitaria.

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## INTRODUCTION

A consequence that comes along the increasing elderly population is the need to preserve the quality of life of this group and stimulate the active aging, which corroborates the early increment of physical activities and leisure. The trend in the elderly, when choosing these activities, is to give greater preference to those that allow socializing, such as the dance, which has been correlated positively with social integration.<sup>1</sup>

A review of articles published between the years 2000 and 2013 reported that the dance decreases the risk of falls and contributes positively to the active aging.<sup>2-4</sup> Furthermore, the practice of dance contributes to improving and maintaining cognition.<sup>5</sup> This specific practice can be provided to people in different urban centers.<sup>1</sup> This situation generates a strategic component for health professionals, allowing adding health education practices and contributing to the active aging.<sup>6-7</sup>

In this sense, health education contributes to the integral health model and exceeds the health-disease process, enables the Health Promotion in health and tends to humanize the attention through the interdisciplinary work.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, seeking and creating spaces of social participation that develop sensitive themes of education based on the preferences of the elderly is a challenge to the contemporary health.<sup>9-10</sup>

Therefore, the objective of this work was to report the experience of developing the ballroom dance workshops associated with actions of health education and healthy aging.

## OBJECTIVE

- To report the experience of developing ballroom dance workshops associated with actions in health education and healthy aging.

## METHOD

Experience report of the implementation of ballroom dance workshops entitled “I want to be your pair: ballroom dance with Health”. The workshop became part of the curriculum of a postgraduate subject of the Nursing School, State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) and was offered to those enrolled in the “*Programa UNIVERSIDADE*” of this institution. This program aims to prevent, encourage and empower the development of people aged 50 years or more, through various activities.

The workshop was coordinated by two professor and counted with the collaboration of seven postgraduate students (nutritionist, psychologist and nurses), as well as by a dance professor. Five weekly meetings were carried out on Thursdays, lasting two hours, which began in April 2018.

In the planning and operation of the workshop, the general structure of the activity was divided into three phases: phase 1, evaluation of the interests and expectations of participants in relation to the workshop and completion of the Clinical-Functional Vulnerability Index-20” (CFVI-20)<sup>11</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> meeting); phase 2, development of health education activities, with three meetings, constructed from the assessment performed on the first day; and the phase 3, final evaluation and closing of the workshop (5<sup>th</sup> meeting). Each meeting consisted of two moments, the first consisted of 40-minute health education activities by the students and the second, dance ballroom lessons lasting 1 hour and 20 minutes. (Figure 1).

| Workshop        | Theme of the meetings      | Ballroom dance lesson                   |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | Group diagnosis            | Presentation of the rhythms             |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | Benefits of ballroom dance | <i>Forró</i> and bolero                 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Healthy eating             | Country and <i>forró</i>                |
| 4 <sup>o</sup>  | Memory                     | Resuming the previous rhythms and waltz |
| 5 <sup>o</sup>  | Final evaluation           | Samba and closing                       |

Figure 1. Description of the meetings and dance lessons of the five workshops carried out. Campinas, Brazil, 2018.

## RESULTS

The workshop participants were 33 people, in the experience of combining dance and health education, with 30 women and three men aged from 51 to 80 years, of whom 76% were 60 years or older, corresponding to 25 people.

1<sup>st</sup> meeting - Evaluation/diagnosis: This first meeting aimed to present the ballroom dance as a

practice of health promotion and quality of life, meet the health needs of the group enrolled in the *UNIVERSIDADE* program, promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge, and combine the knowledge about health to the practice of dance.

In the first workshop, there was the participants' diagnosis. The CFVI-20<sup>8</sup> instrument was applied to assess health risks and a final question was asked to the participants about their

topics of interests, used for the preparation of the programmatic content of other workshops, which addressed the issues of: memory, food and dancing. The participants were asked to move to the area outside the college to begin the practical part of dance, developed in wheel so that they could become familiar and identify with the palms and feet movements of the presented rhythms: *farró*, merengue, bolero and rock. In addition, they exercised the basic steps and watched more advanced choreographies.

2<sup>nd</sup> meeting - Benefits of ballroom dance: this meeting aimed to identify the benefits of ballroom dance, analyze the impact of ballroom dance in the biopsychosocial aspect and reflect on the concept of health and quality of life and its relationship with the ballroom dance in the elderly.

There was a dynamic in which each participant received a colorful ribbon to put in hand and, when the music started, they should look for someone with the ribbon of the same color and introduce themselves and share ideas about the benefits of ballroom dance for health. The exchange of pairs was performed four times, as different songs were played. After that, there was a “brainstorm” on benefits of ballroom dance and facilitators linked the answers to the themes of health and quality of life in the aging process. The documentary “Dance in the third age” was presented to reinforce concepts. In this meeting, the practical moment of dance explored the *farró* and bolero rhythms in a more advanced way.

3<sup>rd</sup> meeting - Healthy eating: This meeting aimed to conceptualize and exemplify the healthy eating, discuss about healthy eating in chronic diseases and reflect on its impact for the elderly.

The food groups and their importance were conceptualized within the context of healthy eating. The subject carbohydrate deepened with the use of educational material that represented the amount of carbohydrates in foods commonly consumed. For the dynamics, the participants divided themselves into groups, received cutouts of food and had to assemble a healthy and a non-healthy meal. From the results, doubts about food myths were clarified. For the dance, the new rhythm presented was country and new steps of *farró* were introduced.

4<sup>th</sup> Meeting - Memory: the meeting aimed to conceptualize what is memory, discuss and reflect on the types of memory and the strategies and exercises that enhance its quality during the aging.

There was a dynamic, in which a random story was initiated by one of the students and sequentially a different word was presented to each participant, who should continue the story by introducing the new word. This allowed addressing the elements of recent and long-term memory.

Furthermore, there was the offer of a material with activities to exercise memory, such as crosswords, word search, calculations, among others. In the dance, the teacher stimulated the participants’ memory recalling all rhythms and steps taught until that day and introduced the waltz.

5<sup>th</sup> meeting - Closing: the meeting aimed to evaluate the workshop through a conversation wheel with questions directed to the participants’ perception of the workshop, achievement of initial perspectives and change proposals. There was satisfaction with the use of dance as an educational tool and with the appreciation of their interests. They suggested extending the meetings for a period of six months. In the dance, the teacher dedicated to the samba rhythm, which the participants indicated in previous workshops.

## DISCUSSION

The educational workshops were built linked to dance in every moment, which facilitated the process of teaching and learning, reinforcing the concepts used in the educational moment until the dance, generating reflection and dynamism. The themes chosen by the participants were incorporated as a common thread between each one and health promotion, example of what occurred with the memory theme, which besides being approached by a group, was recapitulated in moments of dance when the steps learned should be recalled.<sup>12</sup>

The organization of the educational activities based on the previous diagnosis contributed to participants feel active to the development of each workshop.<sup>13-14</sup> Additionally, the time and the structure provided in each workshop were praised, which motivated the positive participation for the second moment focused on ballroom dance.

The affectivity was used as a strategy inherent in education and was present in all its actors along each workshop in the communication process: in the reception, in the diagnosis, when changing the educational time and inviting to the dance moment, in the ending, or when someone asked for specific help. This provided for the development of an environment of care with the other and contributed to the socialization, feeling listened to and appreciated as active agents in the teaching process,<sup>10,13</sup> which corroborates the results of other experiences developed in the dance context.<sup>4-6,14</sup>

However, the number of meetings was perceived as a barrier by the participants and organizers, and should be reviewed by those who want to replicate this kind of experience, because we believe that this experience helps promoting active aging as proposed by the World Health Organization.<sup>7</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The experience of associating the ballroom dance with health education activities allows appreciating the importance and effectiveness of developing health educational actions, which align to people's preferences of social participation and needs. This creates opportunities to develop scenarios for achieving greater autonomy, well-being and increasing the expectation of a healthy life.

There are several workshops in public and private institutions that offer ballroom dance for the elderly. Deepening health promotion into these activities and providing educational environments, through innovative opportunities involving dance and education as one, become an important strategy for promoting active aging.

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