



Mini Review

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Dance and Psychological Benefits- A Mini Review



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Abstract

Dance is not a simple physical movement but is conscious movement, based on emotion, enriched, and imbued with the human element. In addition, dance is a form of physical activity, of mild to moderate intensity. From reviewing the literature, it became clear that the participation in dance is associated with many psycho-social benefits. Thus, dancing is indicated as a suitable form of moderate physical activity that could contribute positively to the psychological health of people of all ages and regardless of their physical fitness. Consequently, the participation in dance is recommended for the improvement of people's psychological state.

Keywords: Dancing; Mood states; Anxiety; Well-being; Psychological state; Historical; Social periods; Physical fitness; Illnesses; Co-dancers; Psychological state; Aggression

Introduction

Psychological health is positively associated with physical activity. The participation in physical activity and exercise is recommended for the improvement of people's psychological state [1-6]. But what about dancing? Does the same apply to dance?

Discussion

Dance is an evolution of human physical movement [7]. It must be emphasized, however, that it is not a simple physical movement. Dance is conscious movement, based on emotion, enriched, and imbued with the human element. When people dance, they combine physical and mental effort, while the relationship between body and soul is intensified [8,9]. Dance addresses a body with many dimensions and levels: biological, social, psychological, artistic, and religious. Moreover, dance is the "language" with which the body expresses and communicates [10]. In dance, each emotion is expressed with a specific movement of the body and each movement and posture of the body is connected to the emotions and the psychological mood state of each dancer [11].

According to Plato, dance, the combination of rhythm and harmony, has been given to humans by the Gods considering that they need them for every event in their lives, for paying respects to the Gods, for rest from the toils of everyday life and

for entertainment (*Plato Laws II.653de, 664e-665ab*). Dance, also, can be used as a physical activity, as includes a big variety of whole-body movements, including mainly movements of the lower limbs, combined with movements of the upper limbs and the head [12,13]. Moreover, dancing as a physical activity fulfills the cardiovascular exercise criteria of American College of Sports Medicine, as its form is continuous, rhythmic, and aerobic, with large muscle groups participating and an intensity ranging at 30%-75% of VO_{2max} [14] and may conduce to physical fitness improvement [12,15-17]. Thus, it can be said that dance is a form of physical activity, a recreational activity, of mild to moderate intensity [18,19], and also, a very popular activity for people of all ages [20,21].

The participation in dance offers improvements in well-being and a better overall health in the participants [22-25]. The participants in dance experience reductions in anxiety, as well as psychological and somatic calmness [26-31]. Moreover, the participation in dancing programs found to affect self-esteem and lead in improvements of psychological state, self-esteem, well-being, mood state and all the parameters that delimit generally the quality of life [32-34].

Dance is a key means of psychotherapeutic intervention as it exerts positive psycho-emotional and social effects [35]. Dance improves morale, reduces feelings of loneliness, and may

contribute to the recovery of certain illnesses or psychiatric and mental conditions [36,37]. In addition, dancing offers an opportunity for social interaction. Thus, dancing with family members can strengthen family relationships, while dancing with friends can widen the social circle [38]. The social nature of the dance prompts the participants to express the need to hold each other, to touch, to generally be in contact and to do things together as a group, as well as to feel that they belong somewhere. In dance groups, moving together is a powerful force in the emotional connection of the individual to the group, a fact that has been attributed to dance in many historical and social periods [39].

The concept of group/community is not expressed orally or in writing. It permeates the consciousness of dancers and influences their social behavior inside and outside of dance [19]. Through dance, friendships and close relationships develop between the dancers and in this way the fear, anxiety, and insecurity of being alone is reduced. "Co-dancers" help and support each other, gain faith, optimism, and a zest for life. Dance participants through the affirmation, recognition of their efforts, but also the freedom, physical and mental, that they feel when dancing, experience positive thoughts, excitement, joy and satisfaction [40]. On an emotional level, dance helps individuals feel happier and overcome anger, frustration, and loss. On a mental level, dance seeks to enhance cognitive skills, motivation, and memory [41]. Dance as a form of physical activity improves cognitive function and leads to multiple brain activation like that of the participation in sports [42,43].

During dancing, memorizing a routine and performing it with the body increases participants' self-esteem and can help reduce physical and emotional tension. Non-competitive exercise and dance activities provide an outlet for physical tensions and stress hormones. In addition, movement experiences during dance enable participants to gain a sense of oneness with their inner self, to better know their inner energy, and they bring a sense of fulfillment and well-being [7]. Furthermore, dance movements produce both subjective and objective improvements, including redefining and enhancing body image, clarifying ego boundaries, providing an outlet for relief from physical tension, anxiety, and aggression, reducing cognitive and kinesthetic disorientation, increasing the capacity for communication, pleasure, fun and spontaneity and supporting therapeutic medical goals [44,45].

Dance leads people to inner relaxation. It provides the basis for imagination and daydreaming, which is a good escape from the problems of everyday life, while at the same time satisfying the need for personal expression. Even dance is a perfect means to escape from mental tension, unpleasant experiences, the feeling of illness experienced by many people today and restores inner calm and composition [46]. Therefore, the participation in dance has a positive effect and improves participants' psychological

state. Consequently, dance should be used for physical and mental renewal and as an antidote to daily tension and stress.

Conclusion

From the literature review, it is evident that dancing is a favorite mode of physical activity documented to lead in psychological state improvement. More specifically, dancing is an excellent activity that could bring about psychological and social benefits. Thus, dancing is indicated as a suitable form of moderate physical activity that could contribute positively to the psychological health of people of all ages and regardless of their physical fitness. In conclusion, the participation in dance is recommended for the improvement of people's psychological state.

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