

Music for life: a case of good practice

Abstract

This research is based on the hypothesis that music education, based on active participation, can improve the quality of life of older people and positively influence the prevention of dementias, such as Alzheimer's. Choir singing has always brought benefits, but active choral singing, including movement and body expression, as well as instrumental practice, can increase a healthy physical and mental life. Music for life is a project that takes place in an association of pensioners and retirees in a small town, in Spain. Participants go once a week to sing, actively learn music, but what they really do is work the laterality of the cerebral hemispheres, boost memory, improve self-esteem, and connect with people of similar characteristics and situations. One of the most important parts of the project is public auditions in homes for the elderly or similar, as part of musical learning, self-esteem and social responsibility. The idea of being able to show other people their musical work, and offer a few hours of joy to older people, makes them feel important and necessary. The research part consists of checking whether these connected activities (singing, corporal expression and memorization), favor the prevention of dementias such as Alzheimer's; improve psychomotor skills and the quality of life of people. At the moment, we have only been able to verify the increase in self-esteem, and the implication involved in participating in a research project.

Keywords: music, psychomotricity, alzheimer, singing, rhythm body

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Introduction

Músicas para la vida [Musics for Life] is a project that is developed in L'Alcora (Spain), based on the experience of several years implementing musical activities with the elderly. In its beginnings it was an active music workshop with older people. Later it was discovered that it improves the quality of life, especially self-esteem, but also psychomotor skills. It is based on the hypothesis that music education, based on active participation, can improve the quality of life of older people and positively influence the prevention of dementias, such as Alzheimer's. Choir singing has always brought benefits, but active choral singing, including movement and body expression, as well as instrumental practice, can increase a healthy physical and mental life. The research team consists of musicians, music therapists and psychologists, which allows a broad field of action and research, responding with the greatest rigor, to the hypothesis put forward.

The general objective is to improve the quality of life of the participants, attending to the psychomotricity and dementias, and to elaborate a scale of measurement / evaluation expofeso. The specific objectives are: to verify that active joint singing can prevent and / or stop dementias in elderly people. Use vocal music to improve memory. Improve psychomotor skills through choral singing. Activate positively the elderly through active choral singing. Improve healthy habits from active choral singing. Use small percussion instruments to influence laterality. Check a scale of measurement expofeso.

Our justification is based on the fact that, in artistic activities, as Broome et al.,¹ allows mental stimulation, so it is not surprising that more and more, artistic and creative activities are recognized as tools to help people with dementia. Another study conducted by Osman, Tischler, and Schneider, in which he used the song, through the project "Singing for the Brain", showed that social inclusion and improvement in relationships, as well as memory and the mood, were relevant among the participants, in addition, through the project manifested a better acceptance of their dementia. These authors state that dementia has detrimental effects on cognitive, psychological and behavioral functioning; therefore, it is important to implement

appropriate psychosocial actions to help control the condition, improve well-being and provide support to caregivers.

Also Vernia et al.,² appeals to UNESCO, regarding the musical education of adults as a means to promote social inclusion and the well-being of the elderly. Noteworthy is the Wigmore Hall space, where different music projects are developed interacting with people with dementia, such as Music for Life. The work is carried out in residences, environments or community places, aimed at people who may be isolated by their advanced age. The objective is to improve the quality of life, creating a space for coexistence among the participants, musicians and caregivers, from a series of workshops and activities.

For Moreno Fernández,³ in recent years, there has been an increase in musical and cultural activities related to the defense of ecological values and sustainable development. In her work, this author, gives us the details of some festivals in the Iberian Peninsula that are ecologically committed, and that tend to develop in remote areas or natural environments, promoting the reduction of environmental impact with educational campaigns to incorporate these good habits in daily life or activities such as the planting of trees are organized. On the other hand, and attending to the sustainability, the meeting of the Heads of State held in September 2015 in New York, 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted,⁴ of which we highlight those that we consider to have a link with our proposal and that can be implemented from the Culture, although of all the SDGs we find direct or indirect links with the culture (Table 1).

The chosen methodology will combine quantitative and qualitative data, within the interpretive paradigm, as indicated by Nieto and Recamán,⁵ the interpretive study covers a set of humanistic currents, addressing human actions and social life. In this sense, Barbera and Inciarte⁶ indicate that the interpretive paradigm is aimed at the researcher looking for reasons and not causes, because the reasons are framed in thought, emotions or logic that motivate people to do something, therefore, the relevant feature of the interpretive approach, according to these authors, is human behavior. Regarding the sample, we took the criteria of Serbia,⁷ which tells us that the

selection of the sample in qualitative studies should not follow the classical procedures; this means that it should not be closed, as the researcher advances according to the information that goes obtaining, making decisions for the new steps to follow. For the construction of the evaluation scale, we will follow the recommendations of Salinas Meruane and Cárdenas Castro,⁸ in which the reasons or reasons are

highlighted, through several questions and propose several items, to obtain a greater degree of validity.

Currently, *Músicas para la Vida* [Musics for Life] has shown evidence of the benefits of music for all people; however, we continue to work on research, with the support of the research project “L’Alcora for Musical Research and Quality of Life”.

Table I SDGs related to cultural involvement

ODS	Definition	Relationship with culture
Health and Well-being	Ensure a healthy life and promote well-being for all at all ages	Active practice from musical activities.
Quality Education	Guarantee an inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Music and art in all stages of education, also serving the elderly.
Decent work and economic growth	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Encourage cultural participation in all its areas and contexts.
Cities and sustainable communities	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.	Participate in other cultures to understand their principles, values and characteristics.
Peace, justice and solidarity institutions	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development	Share traditional festivals, popular culture, actively participate

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we can say that this project is already a tool to provide people with quality of life, and it also participates in other projects that are being developed in health fields, with good results. We know that singing in a choir is beneficial, listening to music is good too, but when we combine singing, body movement, playing an instrument at the same time, we are activating many parts of the body and mind.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that more economic and human resources are needed to be able to take these projects to all the people who need them. Nursing home, hospitals, residences, etc. places where active music can provide quality of life, but it is also necessary for this type of project to be accessible to everyone. It should not be forgotten that prevention is very important, and when we think about degenerative diseases, it is necessary to have an active life.

Finally, and no less important, is the increase in demand in recent times for projects to improve the quality of life through art in general and music in particular. This situation opens an important space for employability and training. Which means that it is necessary to train in new skills and abilities that combine art and health.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that they have no direct or indirect conflicts.

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