

Accepted Manuscript

Title: What research evidence is there that dance movement therapy improves the health and wellbeing of older adults with dementia? A systematic review and descriptive narrative summary

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PII: S0197-4556(17)30146-6
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2018.03.006>
Reference: AIP 1512

To appear in: *The Arts in Psychotherapy*

Received date: 14-7-2017
Revised date: 19-2-2018
Accepted date: 21-3-2018

Please cite this article as: Lyons, Steven., Karkou, Vicky., Roe, Brenda., Meekums, Bonnie., & Richards, Michael., What research evidence is there that dance movement therapy improves the health and wellbeing of older adults with dementia? A systematic review and descriptive narrative summary. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2018.03.006>

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What research evidence is there that dance movement therapy improves the health and wellbeing of older adults with dementia? A systematic review and descriptive narrative summary

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Conflict of interest: None declared.

Funding: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Contribution to authorship: The research took place at Edge Hill University as part of the first author's PhD. SL, VK and BR contributed to conception and design. SL undertook data collection, SL and VK quality reviewed the included papers. SL undertook the analysis, descriptive narrative summary and drafting of paper. VK, BM and MR undertook the review of the draft. All authors contributed to the final approval of the paper.

Highlights

- The existing evidence base for dance movement therapy is limited to mainly qualitative studies of varying methodological quality.
- Theoretically, studies draw on a person-centred approach as well as elements of psychodynamic thinking.
- Therapeutic components include spontaneity and improvisation, dramatic scenarios, rhythmic synchrony and symbolism.
- Across the studies there is a lack of detail regarding type and stage of dementia.
- There is a lack of community-based studies.
- There is an absence of arts-based information collected as research data.

Abstract

In England, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for supporting people with dementia recommend the therapeutic use of dancing and/or music as a treatment for non-cognitive symptoms, but make no direct reference to dance movement therapy or music therapy. Also, previous Cochrane Reviews in these areas have been criticized for being limited to randomized controlled trials focusing on outcomes. In order to maximize findings and explore the clinical process, this systematic review aimed to examine a broad range of research evidence (including quantitative, qualitative and arts based studies) for the benefits to health and wellbeing for adults aged 65 and older with dementia. Searches were conducted on multiple databases using predefined keywords. Two reviewers screened the texts retrieved using inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selection and process was determined by the PRISMA statement and the quality of included studies was appraised using

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