

Public Abstract

First Name: Jean

Middle Name: Ann

Last Name: Krampe

Adviser's First Name: Marilyn

Adviser's Last Name: Rantz

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title: Dance-Based Therapy to Decrease Fall Risk in Older Persons

Loss of balance and diminished mobility are major fall risk factors in older persons. This study tested the effect of dance-based therapy on balance, mobility, and fear of falling. Pre-and post measurements were completed on each person which included the Multi-Directional Reach Test, the GAITRite analysis and the Activities-specific Balance Confidence Scale. The Lebed Method™ (TLM), recommended as dance-based therapy for populations with physical difficulties, was used as the dance-based therapy. Twenty-seven subjects, average age 85, were recruited from an aging in place facility in Columbia, Missouri. The subjects were randomly placed in the group to participate in 18 dance therapy sessions over 8 weeks, or to continue with normal activities. Although statistical significance was not found in the measurements chosen for this study, trends were identified in decreasing Backwards Reach and increasing Step Length Differential following a dance-based therapy program. These results will add to the literature for dance-based therapy with older persons. This study was an extension of a pilot study conducted in 2008, which has been translated into practice with dance-based therapy offered weekly in a Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). As demonstrated in the pilot study, the participants in the dance group enjoyed the activity. This is the first study world-wide using TLM to decrease falls in older persons. Additional research is needed with a larger sample size.