

HEALTH PROMOTION: BENEFITS THROUGH DANCE  
PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE: BENEFÍCIOS ATRAVÉS DA DANÇA  
PROMOCIÓN DE LA SALUD: BENEFICIOS A TRAVÉS DE LA DANZA

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The aim of this study was to report the experience, perspectives and benefits of dance in a university extension project based on the National Health Promotion (PNPS) of Brazil. This is an experience report emerged from the discipline of a master course with the extension project which reaffirmed dance and physical activity as important tools searching for better health and wellness. The three axes analyzed were: perspective, benefits and, experience, reaffirmed the dance as an important tool searching for better health, emphasizing benefits such as decreased pain, improved self-esteem and reducing shyness, increase sense of well being and ability to overcome, improved interpersonal relationships, increased academic performance and increase in body care.

**Descriptors:** Dancing; Health promotion; Movement.

O objetivo deste estudo foi relatar a vivência, perspectivas e benefícios da dança em um projeto de extensão universitária fundamentada na Política Nacional de Promoção da Saúde (PNPS). Trata-se de um relato de experiência surgido a partir da disciplina de um curso de mestrado junto ao projeto de extensão que reafirmou a dança e a atividade física como ferramentas importantes na busca por melhores condições de saúde e bem-estar. Os três eixos analisados: perspectiva, benefícios e, vivência, apontaram a dança como uma importante ferramenta na busca por melhores condições de saúde, ressaltando benefícios como: diminuição da dor, melhoria na autoestima e redução da timidez, aumento da sensação de bem estar e da capacidade de superação, melhora nos relacionamentos interpessoais, maior rendimento acadêmico e aumento no cuidado com o corpo.

**Descritores:** Dança; Promoção da saúde; Movimento.

El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar la experiencia, las perspectivas y los beneficios de la danza en un proyecto de extensión universitaria sobre la base de la Política Nacional de Promoción de la Salud (PNPS) brasileña. Se trata de un relato de experiencia que surgió de la disciplina de un curso de maestria con el proyecto de ampliación que reafirmó la danza y la actividad física como herramientas importantes en la búsqueda de una mejor salud y bienestar. Los tres ejes analizados: perspectiva, beneficios y experiencia de los beneficios, reafirmó la danza como una herramienta importante en la búsqueda de una mejor salud, subrayando beneficios, tales como: disminución del dolor, mejora de la autoestima y reducción en la timidez, aumento de la sensación de bienestar y capacidad de superación, mejora de las relaciones interpersonales, mayor rendimiento académico y aumento en el cuidado del cuerpo.

**Descriptor:** Baile; Promoción de la salud; Movimiento.

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## INTRODUCTION

The documents received from government programs and projects under the Unified Health System (SUS) in order to propose alternatives to promote health to the population, such as the National Policy for Health Promotion (PNPS) contain important areas for reflection about health and what permeates it. Health promotion is the process of enabling people to discover ways to achieve better living conditions and less likely to diseases<sup>1</sup>. Then, PNPS is an attempt by the Ministry of Health, in line with the principles of SUS, together with federal, state and especially municipal managers, to disclose and allocate financial and budgetary means to implement health proposals<sup>2</sup>.

The main areas raised by PNPS are: healthy eating, physical practices/physical activity, sustainable environment, tobacco use prevention, alcohol and other drugs, as well as violence prevention and culture of peace. From these, the study emphasized body/physical activity practices, noting that the use of the term corporal practices lets magnify views and perspectives on health through the eyes of the man and his body, highlighting new practices in health<sup>2</sup>, transposing a reductionist view only understood by the term physical activity, which in a scientific language could refer to its perception as just involving energy expenditure.

The body practices/physical activity include primary health care and in the community, there are actions that map and support services offering activities like hiking, exercise prescription, ludic practices, sports and leisure; training of health workers; inclusion of people with disabilities and covenant with SUS managers, looking for environmental improvements and increased levels of physical activity of the population<sup>2</sup>.

These actions seek to still build mechanisms for sustainability; organizing health services in order to develop counseling initiatives; stimulating integration and strengthening these existing actions in

the area of corporal practices in health as well as develop studies and formulate methodologies able to produce evidence and prove the effectiveness of corporal practices strategies/physical activity in the control and prevention of chronic diseases<sup>2</sup>.

What can be seen is that the care on the subject is now considered also on the influence of various aspects of quality of life and health conditions, recognizing that numerous guided body practices such as dance, tai chi chuan, yoga, gymnastics, can contribute to healthier lifestyles.

The dance has been used as an important strategy in the study about man's relationship with his body. It features benefits by requiring the subject from organizing body movement, the notion of external space, work with kinesthetic and visual field<sup>3</sup>. A study found, when comparing dancers with women who did not practice dance<sup>3</sup>, the need to adapt the body posture during the movements and static positions, according to the pace, interacting with body movements and the people around them positively influencing their body image, to encourage participants a body satisfaction. Through movement and experimentation of the body there is a more organized for the experience of themselves in the world as well as the promotion of rescue oppressed feelings that can interfere with body image and therefore in their quality of life.

The health process and illness of individuals is the result of the methods of organization and production work, and society at a given historical context, where the biomedical system cannot intervene. The challenge of PNPS is raise awareness of the need to prevent diseases and live better, directing them to the co-responsibility and to evaluate the commitment of managers, health professionals, in this kind of care.

Aiming educational processes in health is fundamental to prepare the man for the preservation of their biopsychosocial welfare, reflecting on changes in attitude.

Thus, encouraging the practice of activities such as dance agree with PNPS goals.

Given the above, this study aims to report the experience, perspectives and benefits of dance in a university extension project based on PNPS.

## **METHOD**

The study is characterized by an experience report emerged from the discipline of Promotion and Master of Health Protection in Health Care, in the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM) together with the extension project of Experimental Dance Group (GED) developed by the Physical Education course at the same institution and belonging to the project "THE MEANING OF DANCING", practitioner's experience aspect (approval CEP/UFTM n.2144).

This study was based on PNPS in body practice/physical activity emphasizing the actions of cross-sectoral and mobilization of partners searching for encourage body health practices in the community.

The extension project Dance Experimental Group (GED) began in March 2011 with three main objectives: to train new teachers to work with dance, enable and popularize the dance practice and expand the artistic and cultural language of UFTM community. Currently the GED has a general coordination and five monitors, all of them are physical educators and serves directly, about 90 students, coming from different courses and areas of the institution and the external community.

The project classes are held in the Educational Center of UFTM once a week. The basic content scheduled for all classes (belly dancing, jazz, rhythm, ballroom dancing, ballet) are divided into a few key parts: physical (elongation), technical knowledge of the sport, creation and/or choreographic exercises and relaxation. As there is no selection for classes, groups are very heterogeneous and therefore the preparation and classroom organization is a major challenge for the monitors.

However, it is noteworthy that whatever is the dance chosen, it has at its core the ordering of movements in time and space; it is the release valve of an internalized process and is an important way for the expression of feelings and desires<sup>4</sup>.

The information in this study were collected in the GED group dynamics, with young women aged 18 to 24 years old, students of the two universities graduate courses (six course of physical education and two of math course at the UFTM and two from chemical engineering course at a private university, totaling ten students). It is noteworthy that the GED is open to the community, if students and employees of UFTM do not fill vacancies.

The proposal was implemented after the classes of these students participating in the project for more than one semester and thus they experienced the work in its entirety, that is, classes and presentation in the biannual festival of university dance, organized by project monitors. The interviews took place after the jazz lessons during October 2012.

It is noteworthy that assessment formats are required guided in training and procedural concepts to the UFTM extension projects, since the proposed GED is precisely elucidate sensitive experiences in dealing with the body and its relationship with itself, with others and with the world. In this sense, in all groups the "conversation circles" are held at the beginning of the semester (identifying and understanding the working group) before the choreographic preparation (for everyone to participate and give their opinion on the artistic construction process, which occurs after about two months of school) and at the end of the semester in which opinions, suggestions and criticisms are exposed and adjusted for the following semester.

However, the conversation circle reported in this article had an exceptional basis to understand and analyze the speeches and comments from students from PNPS

goals about “valuing and optimizing the use of public spaces for living and health production for development”, and “stimulate the innovative alternatives and socially inclusive/contributory health promotion actions”<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, to carry out the research, three guiding principles of the discussions in the GED group dynamics were considered: perspective areas, experience areas and benefits areas. The perspective area presented the encouragement of the student to join the project and what the student sought in the group. The benefits areas considered the changes that the student looked in their daily lives. While for the experience area was the student’s perception about the group and his participation in this activity.

## RESULTS

Important aspects involving the relationship of man with his body in the search for a better quality of life were highlighted in the study.

Regarding the perspective area, it was observed that contact with the GED students awakened them to talk about their expectations, their dreams realized, how to get on stage and overcome shyness, surpassing themselves day after day. The pursue for dancing was related to several factors: relaxation, posture, stretching to assist in correction and treatment of health problems such as scoliosis, as well as searching for physical activity that before had had positive experiences.

In the benefits area, the GED students made clear the improvement of cognitive skills; sense of renewal with less back pain; feeling of well-being; decreased shyness and improved interpersonal relationships; increased academic performance; improved self-esteem and overcoming capacity as well as greater involvement and care of the body. The only harm highlighted was the pain due to the body’s requirement on high-impact movements, and even then, exposed as

something small before the benefits, and even forgotten during class.

In the experiences area, the dance was reported as an important tool that offers, in its dynamics, different impressions. The host, appreciation and respect for individuality among participants, personal commitment and involvement of the group plus the experience that dancing offers interpersonal exchange and a better relationship with the body, were transmitted as important insights on motivation and incentive participation practices such as dancing in searching for better health and wellness.

## DISCUSSION

Over the years, the dance has given man the ability to interact with the environment, expressing feelings and improving cognitive function and self-esteem, for the development of interpersonal relationships, of body movements and interaction with others, culture and emotional, and this type of mode favors intellectual skills and logical reasoning<sup>5</sup>. This was evidenced by the GED students participating in this study, where the perception of the importance of dance in the development of emotional intelligence and self-control were reaffirmed.

The perspective area identified that the search for the dance was related to several factors, highlighting relaxation, better posture and stretching to help correct and treatment of health problems such as scoliosis, searching for a physical activity. These results support other studies showing that health has been reported as a major reason for the practice of dance, together with the pleasure and moods<sup>6</sup> as well as the demand for fitness, wellness and socialization<sup>7</sup>, highlighting that through dance sense of well being, group inclusion, reduces anxiety, creates mutual accountability, promotes health and the development of motor function, balance, musicianship and creativity are provided<sup>5</sup>.

In the benefits area of dance, sense of renewal and the reduction of back pain were

reported. Some studies show the dance as a protective factor for musculoskeletal pain such as fibromyalgia<sup>8</sup>.

There were also reported improvement in interpersonal relationships in the benefits area as well as host, valuation, group inclusion, respect for individuality, personal commitment, involvement of the group, experience in interpersonal exchange in experiences area.

By bringing these reports, the students highlighted dance also as a communication tool. In dance, it becomes possible to recognize body language, speaking without the sound of words, the body presents itself and expands into the world to know it, recognize it and relate it better<sup>9</sup>. It favors interpersonal relationships by promoting body contact, interaction with others and biopsychosocial development<sup>10</sup>. Studies also indicate that corporal group activities also trigger the friendship between individuals, reducing social isolation<sup>11</sup> and providing intense benefits to the individual, even when applied in other scenarios, a fact noted in gymnastics with improved mood and decreased stress, and integration between colleagues<sup>12,13</sup>.

Along these lines, the activities of corporal practices group have been reported to assist in promoting health and are in line with the SUS policy proposal. This is due to contribute to quality of life, by engaging well-being and ability to understand/participate, instructing that the individual has responsibilities and learn to deal with their own needs and expectations through body movements as dancing<sup>2,5</sup>. By offering multiple possibilities of contact with the world, it provides interaction, communication, body movement, before a physical activity on the environment<sup>14</sup>. Body is thought comprising the significant cultural manifestations in different human relations<sup>15</sup> as well as the consequences of health conditions.

The benefits area also highlighted improvement of cognitive skills, sense of

well-being, decreased shyness, increased academic performance, improved self-esteem and overcoming capacity as well as greater involvement and care of the body.

In line with these results, Brasileiro and Marcassa<sup>15</sup> confirm these findings, the claim that body language enables better understanding of ourselves and the world around us, creating new possibilities to express, enter and intervene. Searching for deeper understanding of ourselves and the world, transforms and renews realities into simple changes in everyday life. These have an impact beneficially on healthier habits and a better quality of life. Guimarães and Fernandes<sup>7</sup> highlight that dancing brings a healthier lifestyle, working the domains of human behavior (psychomotor, socio-affective and perceptual and cognitive) through body movement, becoming a path in the search for greater quality of life indices and health.

It is reinforced that listing of several movements and flexibility capabilities, stimulating short-term memory and concentration, the dance promotes quality of life.

Before this same point of view, it is emphasized that this research adds to others that bring that to start dancing the subject brings emerged feelings of his everyday life, from music and exchanging glances with the other members that these subjective aspects suffer interference with physical activity. They reaffirm these important improvements in self-esteem and self-confidence, greater capacity to relaxation, improved sleep quality, reducing crucial factors in managing daily stress<sup>16</sup>, as highlighted in this study. Supporters of corporal practices present results as less consistency in mood changes, decreased anxiety and depression, feeling of being young and willing, reflecting positively in many ways that promote improved quality of life<sup>14</sup>.

It is noteworthy that the proposal to promote meetings in order to give voice to the subjects of this project was important to

present the results here indicated, reaffirming that such initiatives can have a positive impact on well-being and health conditions of the people. However it is said that more meetings and further information collection on these subjects could expand more information and discussions presented, raising further deepen looks on the perception of these people.

It is considered that it is necessary to identify, reflect and disseminate studies in health care that treat the body as truly human, guided, particularly in identifying and overcoming old paradigms imposed in science, health, and then in professional practice<sup>17</sup>. I must be perceived the body as a whole, requiring the various areas of knowledge intervention encompassing their biological, social, historical, political and cultural needs, with committed professionals to exercise the discovery of a body that speaks, thinks, lives and feels. Therefore, dance can bring up these minimized issues in vocational training as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

This experience reaffirms that dance and physical activity are important tools searching for better health and well-being as well as the benefits of the practice by highlighting improvements such as decreased pain, improved self-esteem and overcoming capacity increase in the sense of well-being; reducing shyness and improved interpersonal relationships; increased academic performance and increase body care.

This research when reporting an experience, it discloses corporal practices and the changes caused by dancing in daily life and in the various spheres that comprise the man.

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS

**All authors** had equally contributions in experiences descriptions, dialogues analysis, as well as final article writing.