

## Music, Art and Dance Therapy in Parkinson's Disease: Gauging Awareness and Providing Education

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Dr. Joseph H. Friedman discusses the significance of tremor in the December edition of *Rhode Island Medical Journal*, and similarly, many other writers have outlined the impact of neurologic conditions on functional status and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> Despite demonstrated benefits of music, art, and dance (MAD) therapies in alleviating symptom burden for people with Parkinson's disease (PwPD) and related neurologic conditions, there is little knowledge about patient awareness of these resources.<sup>2-5</sup> By surveying PwPD, we identified areas in which healthcare providers can supplement patient knowledge and demonstrated the efficacy of a 15-minute educational intervention in increasing interest in MAD therapy participation.

Following neurology appointments, informed consent was verbally obtained and 10 PwPD completed a survey assessing interest and involvement in MAD, along with preconceptions about its role in PD therapy [Table 1]. They then had the opportunity to select one or more of the three complementary therapies to learn about and were given flyers describing the selected therapy's role in managing PD and local/online resources for engagement. Participants

reviewed these flyers with the researcher and were subsequently surveyed on the intervention's efficacy and their willingness to engage in MAD therapies. Descriptive statistics were obtained on each response.

Within this population [Supplementary Tables 1 and 2; please email the author for these tables], the majority of participants expressed interest in music (90%), while three (30%) and two (20%) expressed interest in art and dance, respectively. Although 50% had previously taken music, art, or dance classes, only one (10%) was still involved. Only one patient (10%) had been informed about MAD in the context of PD, and none knew of community resources for MAD therapy. 90% of participants believed music could help with PD symptoms, and 40% believed visual arts and dance each could help. All participants believed MAD could help with mood, with varying responses for other symptoms [Supplemental Table 3; please email the author for this table]. Eight (80%) participants were interested in learning more about music therapy, six (60%) about visual art therapy, and two (20%) about dance therapy. All participants reported finding the intervention helpful, and nine (90%) said that they would consider MAD (70% music, 50% visual arts, 30% dance).

While we acknowledge limitations in sample size, participant self-selection, and geographic representativeness, PwPD were highly interested in participating, and recruitment required fewer than 10 hours. Our findings provide insight into the value of conversations about these therapies between PwPD and healthcare providers. Despite little current involvement in MAD, most participants were interested in initiating involvement post-intervention, suggesting that a brief discussion during a provider visit could increase participation. Furthermore, despite more extensive research supporting dance as an adjunctive treatment for PD, music and visual arts were substantially more popular as therapies, suggesting that they should be more prominently discussed alongside dance. Finally, participants with a family member present for the intervention expressed more interest in MAD than participants there alone, and family members often encouraged engagement. This suggests that it is beneficial for healthcare professionals to involve loved ones during patient education to achieve the best outcomes. ❖

**Table 1.** Participant responses to a survey assessing interest in MAD therapies (N = 10). Participants were allowed to select more than one answer for each question.

	Music	Art	Dance
Number of participants who initially expressed interest in MAD	9	3	2
Number of participants who were involved in previous MAD classes	3	0	2
Number of participants who are still involved in MAD	0	0	1
Number of participants who had previously discussed the role of MAD in PD	1	0	0
Number of participants who believed that MAD can help PD symptoms	9	4	4
Number of participants who were interested in hearing more about MAD	8	6	2
Number of participants who considered engaging in MAD post-intervention	7	5	3

PD = Parkinson's disease.

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