

Un rapport de l’OMS révèle que la pratique d’activités artistiques est bénéfique pour la santé

- Mary Corcoran, Univadis, Actualités Médicales, 26 déc. 2019

Pratiquer des activités artistiques peut être bénéfique pour la santé mentale et physique, selon un récent [rapport](#) du Bureau régional de l’Organisation mondiale de la Santé (OMS) pour l’Europe.

L’étude, qui est la revue la plus complète des données probantes sur les arts et la santé à ce jour, a analysé les données probantes de plus de 3 700 études provenant de 900 publications dans le monde.

Elle a identifié que les arts jouent un rôle majeur dans le cadre de la prévention des problèmes de santé, de la promotion de la santé et de la prise en charge et du traitement des maladies tout au long de la vie.

Le rapport souligne comment les activités artistiques peuvent servir à compléter ou améliorer les protocoles thérapeutiques dans les structures de soins de santé. Il décrit par exemple comment la danse s’est avérée apporter des améliorations cliniquement significatives des scores moteurs pour les personnes atteintes de la maladie de Parkinson, tandis que le fait d’écouter de la musique ou de réaliser des créations artistiques peut réduire les effets secondaires des traitements anticancéreux. Le rapport fait observer que certaines interventions artistiques ne produisent pas seulement des résultats satisfaisants, mais sont également plus rentables que des traitements biomédicaux plus standards.

Le Dr Piroska Östlin, directrice régionale de l’OMS pour l’Europe par intérim, a fait la déclaration suivante : « Introduire l’art dans la vie des gens par des activités telles que la danse, le chant, la visite de musées et la participation à des concerts permet d’apporter une nouvelle dimension à la façon dont nous pouvons améliorer la santé physique et mentale ».

- [Références](#)

Fancourt D, Finn S. [What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review](#). Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2019 (Health Evidence Network (HEN) synthesis report 67).

World Health Organization. [Can you dance your way to better health and well-being?](#) For the first time, WHO studies the link between arts and health. 11 November 2019.

Can you dance your way to better health and well-being? For the first time, WHO studies the link between arts and health

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Copenhagen, Helsinki, 11 November 2019

Engaging with the arts can be beneficial for both mental and physical health. This is a key conclusion of a new report from the WHO Regional Office for Europe analysing the evidence from over 900 global publications – the most comprehensive review of evidence on arts and health to date.

“Bringing art into people’s lives through activities including dancing, singing, and going to museums and concerts offers an added dimension to how we can improve physical and mental health,” says Dr Pirooska Östlin, WHO Regional Director for Europe a.i. “The examples cited in this groundbreaking WHO report show ways in which the arts can tackle ‘wicked’ or complex health challenges such as diabetes, obesity and mental ill health. They consider health and well-being in a broader societal and community context, and offer solutions that common medical practice has so far been unable to address effectively,” Dr Östlin explains.

The report reviews arts activities that seek to promote health and prevent ill health, as well as manage and treat physical and mental ill health and support end-of-life care. It will be launched on Monday, 11 November at 08:00 CET during an event in Helsinki, Finland, which will bring together experts, policy-makers, practitioners and service users to discuss the role of arts interventions in health care. The event will be live-streamed.

1. Arts and health throughout life

From before birth to the end of life, the arts can positively influence health. For example, young children whose parents read to them before bed have longer night-time sleep and improved concentration at school. Among adolescents living in urban areas, drama-based peer education can support responsible decision-making, enhance well-being and reduce exposure to violence. Later in life, music can support cognition in people with dementia – singing in particular has been found to improve attention, episodic memory and executive function.

2. Arts in health care

In health-care settings, arts activities can be used to supplement or enhance treatment protocols. For example:

- listening to music or making art have been found to reduce the side effects of cancer treatment, including drowsiness, lack of appetite, shortness of breath and nausea;
- arts activities in emergency settings, including music, crafts and clowning, have been found to reduce anxiety, pain and blood pressure, particularly for children but also for their parents; and
- dance has been found repeatedly to provide clinically meaningful improvements in motor scores for people with Parkinson's disease.

The report highlights that some arts interventions not only produce good results, but can also be more cost-effective than more standard biomedical treatments. They can combine multiple health-promoting factors at once (such as physical activity and mental health support) and have a low risk of negative outcomes. Because arts interventions can be tailored to have relevance for people from different cultural backgrounds, they can also offer a route to engage minority or hard-to-reach groups.

Several countries are now looking to arts and social prescribing schemes, whereby primary-care doctors can refer their patients to arts activities.

3. Policy considerations

The report outlines policy considerations for decision-makers in the health sector and beyond, such as:

- ensure the availability and accessibility of arts-for-health programmes within communities;
- support arts and cultural organizations in making health and well-being part of their work;
- promote public awareness of the potential health benefits of arts engagement;
- include arts in the training of health-care professionals;
- introduce or strengthen referral mechanisms from health- or social-care facilities to arts programmes or activities; and
- invest in more research, particularly in scaling up arts and health interventions, and evaluating their implementation.

4. Definition of “arts”

The report reviewed the health benefits (either through active or passive participation) in five broad categories of arts: performing arts (music, dance, singing, theatre, film); visual arts (crafts, design, painting, photography); literature (writing, reading, attending literary festivals); culture (going to museums, galleries, concerts, the theatre); and online arts (animations, digital arts, etc.).

Further resources