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Dance as a lifelong healthy activity: a literature scoping review

Práctica de danza como actividad saludable a lo largo de la vida. Revisión de alcance

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Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to the performing arts, particularly dance, as a relevant practice in society. With its various styles, dance can adapt to the needs of the population and social conditions. The belief that it has multiple benefits for overall health prompts a review of existing scientific literature on dance. This study aims to investigate the contributions of recent literature on the benefits of dance practice in healthy individuals of all ages, determine its appropriateness for overall health at any stage of life, and identify its concrete benefits. A qualitative analysis was conducted on documents published between 2012 and 2022 using the Atlas Ti 8 software. The study found an increase in publications that recognize dance as a tool for promoting healthy benefits, including psychological and mental benefits in children, physical, mental, and social benefits in teenagers and young people, physical, psychological, and emotional benefits in adults, and physical, emotional, and social benefits in the elderly. The study concludes that dance practice improves overall health at all stages of life.

Keywords: performing arts; health; dance; welfare; emotions

Resumen
Los tiempos vividos por el COVID-19 han posicionado a las artes escénicas y dentro de estas a la danza en una situación de reconocimiento. Como práctica en sus diferentes estilos, ofrece la capacidad de adaptarse a las necesidades de la población y a diferentes situaciones sociales. La afirmación de ser una actividad con múltiples beneficios para la salud integral lleva a considerar la necesidad de revisar hoy la documentación existente. Los objetivos del estudio son averiguar las aportaciones de la literatura encontrada en los últimos años en relación con los beneficios de la práctica de danza en personas de cualquier edad ausentes de enfermedad, delimitar si esta actividad es apropiada para la salud integral en cualquier etapa natural de la vida y conocer los beneficios concretos de esta práctica. Se realiza una revisión de alcance de documentos publicados entre el 2012 y el 2022 incluídos, utilizando el software Atlas Ti 8 para el análisis cualitativo. Se constata un incremento de publicaciones que integran la danza como herramienta para desarrollar beneficios saludables, generando beneficios psicológicos y mentales en niños; físicos, mentales y sociales en adolescentes y jóvenes; físicos, psicológicos y emocionales en adultos y en la vejez físicos, emocionales y sociales. Se concluye que la práctica de danza mejora diferentes aspectos de la salud integral en todas las etapas de vida.

Palabras clave: artes escénicas; salud; danza; bienestar; emociones.

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Introduction

The report with global impact published in 2019 by WHO (Regional Office for Europe) determines the consideration that all the arts are beneficial for the welfare of the population, specifically for the promotion of health, as a tool for groups with persistent health problems or preventively for a healthy state (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). That is a review that values both the practice of artistic activity and the consumption in the public condition of works of art (Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Parallel to the publication, the world population was immersed in a pandemic due to COVID-19 with strict confinement. In this circumstance, different online proposals arise that offer the possibility of enjoying works of art that have never been digitized (Barrantes, Cruz, Rangel, and Parejo, 2021; Torres-Perez, 2021; Ollora-Triana et al., 2021; Bohn & Hogue, 2021; Dalmases, 2020; Encalada, 2020) bringing the different performing arts closer to all homes. This enclave has witnessed remarkable growth in the consumption of art as a receiver and in the practice of its different forms.

Specifically, the performing arts and dance as cultural products have been made visible, and companies worldwide added digitalized resources in open access. There has been remarkable growth in the practice of dance activities and the consumption of shows and these phenomena support the social perception of dance. Also, they are a sustainable resource in times of pandemic and have brought health benefits to those who have approached them. (Barrantes et al., 2021; Hansen, Main, and Hartling, 2021).

The increase in the consumption of these activities supports studies that provide evidence of the benefits of dance as an art form for wellness and health. All this places these activities with physical and motor requirements, aesthetic, artistic, and creative contributions, in a significant and demanded situation. (Chappell et al, 2021).

The situation experienced in the pandemic identifies health as a relative moment, that is, a period of health-illness that varies not only individually but collectively, and that has been the result of the determinants that have occurred in a broad globalized society: genetic, biological and ecological (San Martín and Pastor, 1998, as cited in Valenzuela, 2016). There

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are at least three relevant components in the state of health: one subjective, well-being; another objective, capacity for function and finally, the ecological or biological, mental, and social adaptation of the individual (Valenzuela, 2016, p.55). The psychological and mental aspect relates to the emotional from a conception of integral health. The practical, socio-historical, cultural, and economic aspects are incorporated, affecting human health broadly (Gavidia & Talavera, 2012; Valenzuela, 2016). The concept of integral health has been globalized and damaged, needing concrete tools to prevent and recover each aspect.

In this circumstance of recovery of the state of health, the practice of dance is determinant in mental and social health perspectives, influencing well-being throughout life (Krampe, 2013). Specifically, and due to its motor involvement, its practice in patients with COVID recovery has favored cardiovascular and respiratory improvement, safety, and effectivity (Chappell et al., 2021; Ding et al., 2021; Sheppard & Broughton, 2020). Benefits are also studied with patients who have suffered from cardiovascular disease or stroke (Kipnis et al., 2022).

Some physical improvements it contributes to are reduced blood pressure and resting heart rate, increased muscle mass, and reduced fat content, linked to improved postural balance (Pylvänäinen, Muotka, and Lappalainen, 2015).

Any appropriate dance style can induce positive functional adaptations for balance in older adults (Ararat-Garcia, Ballesteros-Henao, Sanchez, & Ordoñez-Mora, 2022; Hofgaard, Ermidis, & Nohr, 2019); Vella-Burrows, Pickard, Wilson, & Clift, 2017.; Fernández-Argüelles, Rodríguez-Mansilla, Espejo-Antúnez, Garrido-Ardilla, and Pérez-Muñoz, 2015), this capacity is impaired during aging, making falls one of the leading causes of injury or hospital admission (Krampe, 2013). The practice also improves metabolic adaptations and positively impacts movement and physical activity, which is considered enjoyable, with social benefits and improving mood (Bungay, Hughes, Jacobs, & Zhang, 2022; Hofgaard, Ermidis, & Nohr, 2019.).

In this same line, it develops an improvement of balance in patients with Parkinson's disease and other neurological conditions such as spinal cord injury, indicating that its

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practice could have more profound neurological benefits, also optimizing spatiotemporal parameters of gait and motor function in individuals with sclerosis and other diseases (Kipnis et al., 2022).

Concerning mental and affective health, improvements are observed in variables of quality of life, body image, and general well-being and related to states of depression, anxiety, and interpersonal competence, decreasing the clinical ones concerning these mental states (Hofgaard, Ermidis, and Nohr, 2019; Ho, Fong, Cheung, Yip, & Luk, 2016).

All these points to the fact that the practice of dance can be used for the recovery of psychological and physical well-being in people suffering from different types of physical, mental, and neurological diseases (Liu, Yang, Xiao, Zhang, and Osmani, 2022; Millman, Terhune, Hunter, & Orgs, 2021).

However, if the WHO definition of health is taken as a starting point (Basic Documents, 2014) indicated in its constitutional charter as "the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (p.5), any of the benefits of its practice sustained in previous lines, would be referring only to states of affection or disease in any of the aspects of this vision of integral health, which includes as complete identity the human being in the world that surrounds him/her in the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions (Basic Documents, 2014; Gavidia & Talavera, 2012; Golanty, 2009).

In this enclave arises the purpose of exploring the most current literature on the benefits of the practice of dance, so this work aims to conduct a scoping review of articles published between the years 2012-2022, both included, to know the specific benefits that the practice of dance brings to the overall health in a healthy population, considering all stages of life.

Methodology

This scoping review has been prepared following the PRISMA statement (Page et al., 2021) considering this report in the verification.

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Given that the concept of integral health broadly includes the physical, social, mental, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, a qualitative analysis is carried out that allows us to start from more general research questions and integrate studies with multiple designs (Chambergo-Michilot, Díaz-Barrera, and Benites-Zapata, 2021) in order to know the current state of the evidence.

The steps followed are outlined by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) for scoping reviews:

1. Identify research questions

A first approach is made through an initial search type "dance and health," in which documents have been obtained that address the care of different disease states in any of its stages from dance, concluding that this practice as an intervention has promising physical, psychological, cognitive, and social benefits. (Kipnis et al., 2022).However, a scoping review is needed to provide information on the research conducted, identify gaps and suggest future directions that relate the activity and its benefits for the health and well-being of healthy people or in the absence of disease. The following questions are posed:

What does the existing literature from 2012 to 2022 provide of the benefits of dance in people of any age absent of disease?

Is dance practice an appropriate activity for integral health at any natural stage of people's lives?

2. Identify relevant studies

The search was initiated in the Scopus and Web of Science databases through advanced search "Topic": dance and health, not a disease, not injuries, not professional not styles, years 2012-2022, articles and reviews in Spanish and English, open access and areas related to the dimensions of integral health. Subsequently, in Google Scholar by, we searched: dance and health, not the disease, not injuries, not professional not styles, years 2012-2022, only pages in Spanish, review articles, and finally, Dialnet with the search: dance and health, not a disease, years 2012-2022, journal article, Spanish and English.

The table below shows the eligibility criteria used:

Table 1

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Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion criteria	Studies published from January 2012 to October 2022, both included. The studies include any stage of life with a healthy population considering the specific characteristics of the life stage. Studies describe benefits in any of the dimensions of health: social, physical, mental, emotional, and cognitive.
Exclusion criteria	The studies refer to practices not considered dance in any of its styles. The studios integrate the professional population or dance students in any of its styles. The studies integrate populations with different conditions or disease situations in any of the following aspects: physical and mental.

Source: Own elaboration

3. Selection of studies

The studies are incorporated into the bibliographic manager Mendeley for selection and organization. Three reviewers independently examined the documents obtained and performed a reading about the inclusion and subsequent analysis. A PRISMA flow chart (Figure n.º 1) of the study selection process is used (Page et al., 2021).

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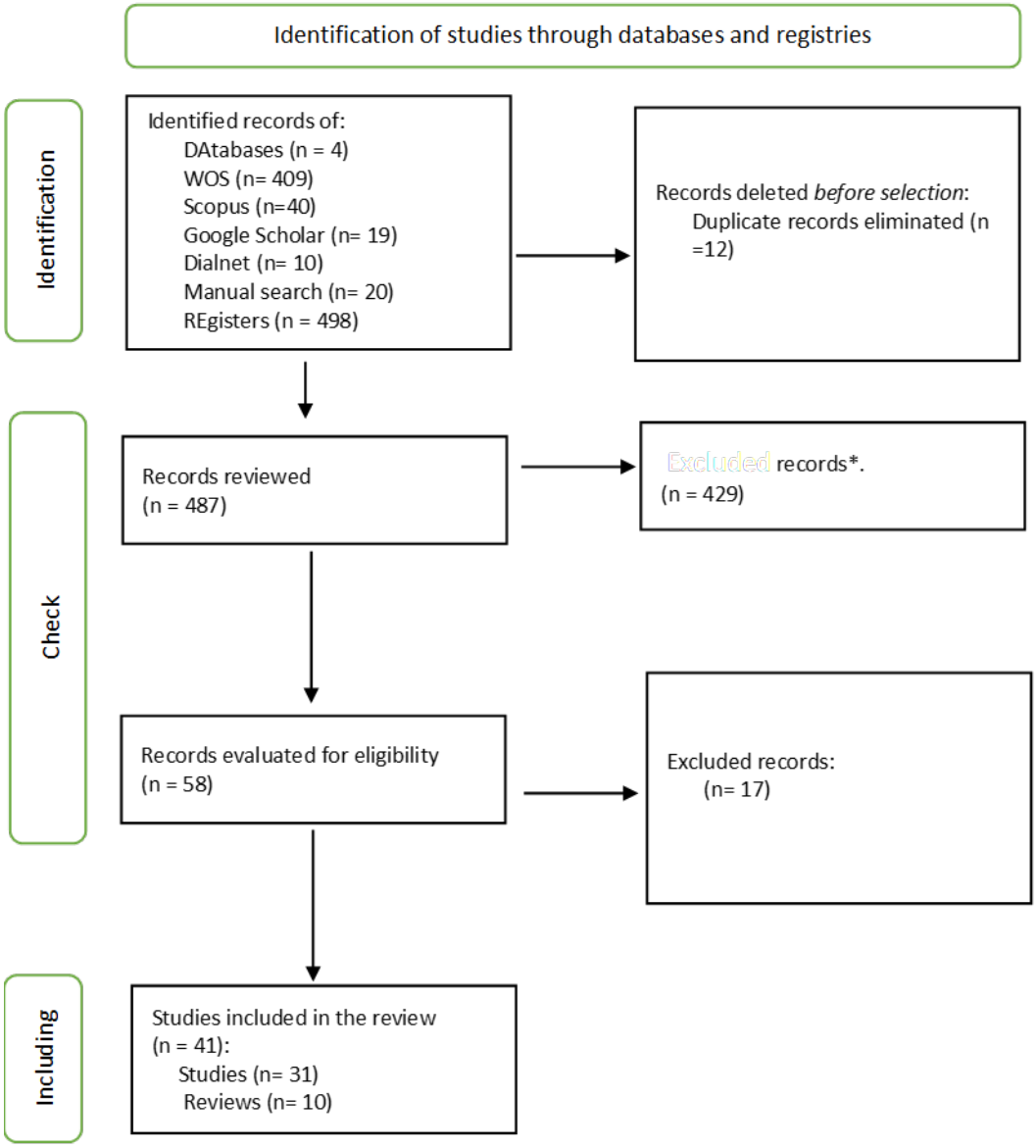

Figure 1: Flow chart of study identification, prepared by the authors based on Page et al. (2021)

Tabulate results

The Atlas ti. 8, software was used to analyze the results qualitatively. Three coding processes are distinguished: deductive/theoretical, categories are opened as *list* coding*; open* (inductive), categories are extracted that are derived from and form part of the previous ones

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and others; and finally, selective coding (San Martín, 2014). This process seeks to strip the concepts and ideas that generate the categories, analyze the data, and identify and answer the review questions. Two researchers will start from the same categories *in a list* and perform the *open* categorization by pairs.

4. Collate, summarize, and report data.

The extracted data are provided through graphs and figures that facilitate the visualization of the information. The codes and subcodes cleared concerning integral health and the benefits achieved with the practice of dance by the population at any stage of their lives, healthy or disease-free, are collated.

Analysis of results

Figure n.º 2 shows the life stages of development proposed by Mansilla (2000). Mansilla (2000) about the samples of the studies reviewed. Within the analysis of the adult stage, several documents have been found that describe samples composed only of women. This study category is integrated as part of the adult population but with its analysis.

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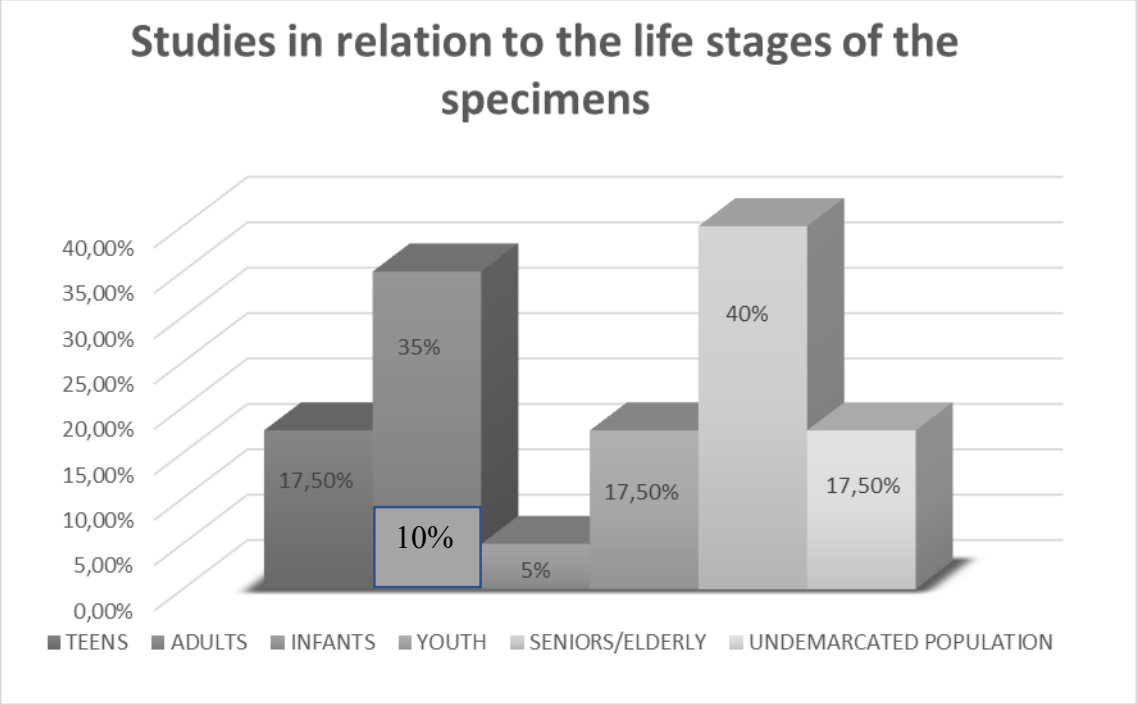

Figure 2. Studies concerning the vital stages of the samples.

According to the data, the highest percentage of the population that has practiced any dance activity is within their stage of old age (+ 65 years), representing a sample of 40% of the documents. The next stage is adulthood (25 to 64 years), whose sample represents 35%; within this stage, 10% of the sample that develops the dance activity are exclusively women, the rest adults in general. Adolescence (12 to 17 years) and youth (18 to 24 years) are each represented by 17.5%. The population is not delimited because they are studies in which the age of the sample that performs activities needs to be defined. Finally, only 5% of the documents include a sample of children (0 to 11 years of age).

Secondly, Figure n.º 3 presents the results concerning the different aspects of integral health and its benefits in each stage that is part of the samples.

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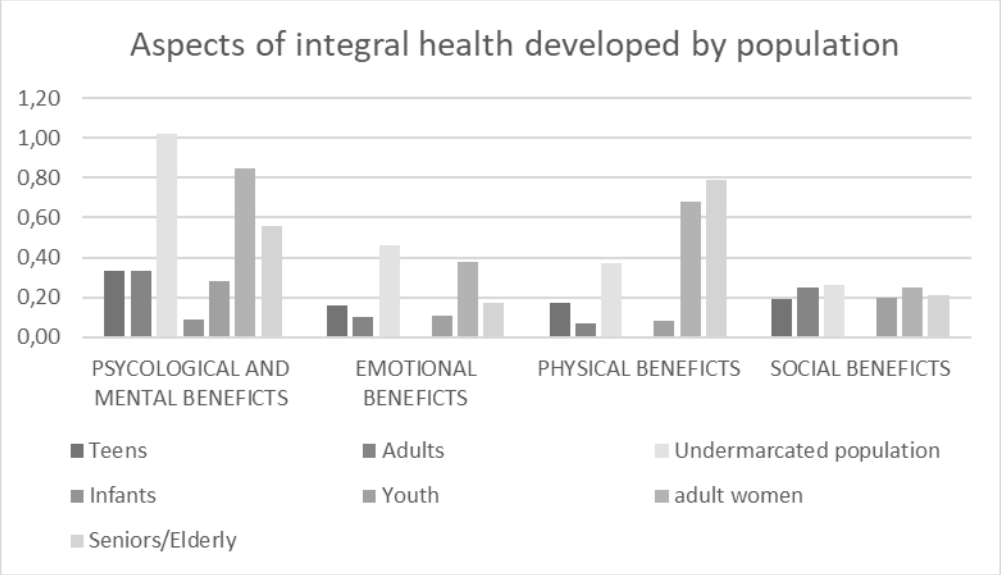

Figure 3. Aspects of integral health developed by population.

The sample in the childhood stage only obtains benefits linked to psychological and mental aspects. The non-delimited population obtains first psychological and mental benefits, secondly, emotional, similarly, but to a lesser extent, physical and lastly, social benefits. Adolescents obtain psychological and mental benefits first, social second, and both emotional and physical last. Young people obtain psychological and mental first and social second. Adults, psychological and mentally first, social second, and few physical and emotional benefits are observed. However, women obtain more benefits than the general adult population in any of the aspects.

Finally, the elderly or old age stage obtains physical benefits in the first place, followed by psychological and mental, and thirdly, social and emotional.

Figure n.º 3 lets us observe which population group obtains the most benefits with all the sample stages. Thus we see that the childhood stage is the one that describes the minor benefits, only psychological and mental, and the stage with an undefined population in which more benefits are described, also psychological and mental. The stage of adult women follows that with psychological and mental benefits and older people with physical benefits.

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Discussion

As the study published by WHO states (Fancourt and Finn, 2019), there is evidence that the practice of dance as an art form contributes to the fundamental aspects of the integral health of the population.

Each of the five life stages reviewed obtained different benefits. The child population studied, despite not being in a state of illness, did not enjoy physical fitness, which has favored the fact of obtaining benefits and improvements in physical health (Porter, Cuthbertson, & Evenson, 2020; Lipman, Bazelon, Rhodes, Preston, & Deatrick, 2012). On the other hand, at this stage, benefits have been obtained in happiness and satisfaction, improving self-esteem and general well-being (Abilleira, Fernández-Villarino, Ramallo, & Prieto, 2017). These benefits are achieved in the first place with the realization of activities related to dance movement therapy (Liu et al., 2022), belonging to the creative arts group in psychotherapy (Jimenez, 2011). Secondly, with current and modern styles, one of the particular elements is the use of music close to the tastes of this population, which is considered a factor that leads to a state of happiness and motivation for the practice (Abilleira et al., 2011).

The adolescent participants have experienced the practice of different styles, the most practiced being ballroom dance, urban dance, folkloric dance, and dance movement therapy (Liu et al., 2022; Kelly & Leventhal, 2021; Atkins et al., 2018; Wiedenhofer & Koch, 2017; Schroeder et al., 2017; Sivvas, Batsiou, Vasoglou, and Filippou, 2015; Bruce & Brown, 2010). Participants who were physically fit found the practice interesting for the improvement of heart rate during exercise. In daily activities, increasing body efficiency and coordination (Wiedenhofer & Koch, 2017) that favors the preservation of a good state of health, this has contributed to minimizing anxiety and depression states experiencing its practice as pleasant and fun (Schroeder et al., 2017; Sivvas et al., 2015). In all studies with this population, benefits are obtained in social relationships, creating new contacts maintained over time and improving mental, emotional, and affective health (Atkins et al., 2018). As a positive benefit, they observe the modification of behaviors related to sedentary lifestyles due to the use of cell phones and television, changing this time of inactivity by performing physical activity by

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participating in the program (Atkins et al., 2018). That contributes to bet on the development of programs with the practice of dance as a complete health prevention, improvement of technological use behaviors in any of the stages, and the re-establishment of non-virtual social relationships as part of adolescent life (Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Youth, similar to adolescents, have experimented with styles such as hip-hop and traditional dance, viewing participation as an opportunity for social connection, which has prompted them to continue the practice and recognize improvement in personal and mental health behaviors by engaging in physical activity (Atkins et al., 2018; Dai et al., 2015; Harris & Stewart, 2012). In turn, a change in sedentary behaviors and positive attitude to engage in physical activity in their lives is observed, considering these activities essential to continue the social relationships created and a valuable tool to engage young people in positive activities (Atkins et al., 2018; Harris & Stewart, 2012).

Adults have been able to perform the activities with an appropriate level of effort, being able to complete the programs even in practices that interacted with younger populations (Schroeder et al., 2017). 80% of the participants have experienced an improvement in heart rate and blood pressure, in addition to improving physical appearance by controlling weight (Schroeder et al., 2017). However, programs to improve balance through dance have not reported significant changes; participation has been maintained by enrichment in social life and emotional and psychological well-being (Hofgaard et al., 2019; Otoole et al., 2015).

In addition to experiencing the public benefits produced in their stage, adult women have considerably increased their self-esteem, creating a space for expression, pleasure, and emancipation, which combines social and emotional benefits (Pezdek, Dolinski and Zydmont, 2022). Among this group, the benefits vary since, in the case of sedentary women, they have improved their efficiency of movement and agility, social life, and mental health. For working women, the moments of practice have meant an increase in vitality and improved mental health, in addition to the development of emotional intelligence in both cases (Pezdek et al., 2022; Skurvydas et al., 2022; Barranco-Ruiz, Paz-Viteri, and Villa-González, 2020).

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Participation in intergenerational and family programs has also contributed to affective and emotional benefits in the general adult population, increasing motivation for physical activity (Atkins et al., 2019; Atkins et al., 2018).

Older people suffer deterioration in different aspects of integral health due to the natural aging process. Dance, including motor skills, cognitive and sensorimotor abilities, and social skills, has induced improvements in cognition (Domene, Moir, Pummell, & Easton, 2016). With the practice of different adapted styles, it has been possible to increase physical efficiency by improving the strength and flexibility capabilities involved in balance, optimizing the static and dynamic balance of participants (Cao, Maeda, Shima, Kurata, & Nishizono, 2007) which has increased safety concerning the risk of falls suffered by this population (Krampe, 2013). A determining feature is improving the ability to balance without generating significant progress in postural control but in ankle mobility. This aspect influences the bipedal position and gait (Wang and Zhao, 2021). Mobility and maximal O_2 volume have increased, improving cardio-respiratory capacity and metabolic adaptation, optimizing body mass index and consequently improving body weight (Hofgaard et al., 2019; Vella-Burrows et al., 2017; Rodrigues-Krause, Boufleur and Krausse, 2016; Hwang & Braun, 2015). The different experiences have generated emotions such as anger and sadness, as well as fun and affection, which has caused these people to continue with the activity based on the benefits they have felt immediately and has led to the development of emotional intelligence and the recognition of emotions that encourage them not to stop the practice, despite the setbacks, valuing the welfare it has brought them (Alfredsson & Heikkinen, 2019)

This population has discovered an activity that produces multiple social benefits of community bonding, preserves cognitive function, and expands the network of friends, contributing to positivity (Štambuk & Tomičić, 2020).

Conclusions

The evidence in this field has grown in recent years being able to extract from the existing literature the feasibility and potential of dance to achieve comprehensive health

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benefits as a tool for the prevention and maintenance of good health status of the population. About the objective of the review, the literature found confirms that dance as a practical activity is adaptable and appropriate in all natural stages of life of the healthy population for integral health, offering multiple possibilities not only in a face-to-face situation but also in conditions of impossibility to attend the places of its practice, which places it as a sustainable practice and within reach of the entire population. The main benefits obtained vary according to the stages: infancy mainly psychological and mental benefits; adolescence and youth physical, mental, and social benefits; adulthood mainly psychological, emotional, and physical benefits related to functionality; finally, the elderly in a broad way physical and motor functionality benefits, development of emotional intelligence, and improvement in life and social relationships.

The main limitation is the need for studies in the infant, youth, and adolescent stages with a sufficient sample. To this is added the existence of studies whose population is not delimited so that their conclusions cannot be related to specific populations. However, to public benefits and, finally, it is considered necessary to continue research to offer delimiting conclusions concerning physical benefits since they require extensive practices over time, unlike other aspects of integral health that, as has been observed, are achieved in shorter periods.

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