



The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing



Participants' experiences of at-home dance during COVID-19

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Motor simulation in dance – watching and imagining

Movement is influenced through **watching, imitating and imagining** in dance

(Bek et al., 2020; Blasing et al., 2012)

Movement imagery can be...

- Visual ('seeing')
- Kinaesthetic ('feeling')
- Analogy (moving like...)

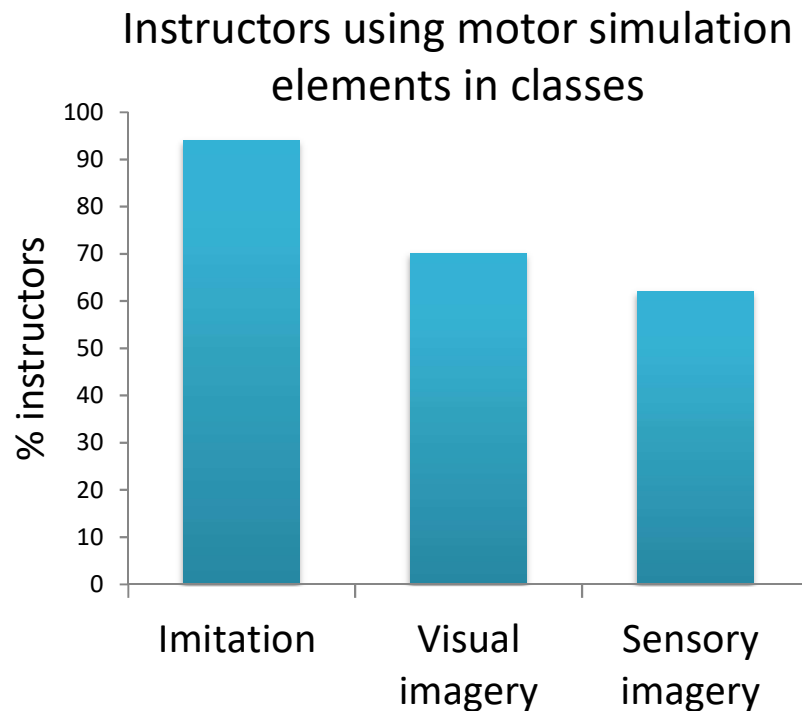


Jill Jennings

Observation and imagery activate **motor control areas in the brain**



Motor simulation in dance – watching and imagining



*“Rather than saying for example lift the arm in front and then to the side, we might say **imagine you are reaching forwards and then opening a door**”*

*“Using imagery... has allowed participants to **embody different qualities**”*

*“...to **watch and perform what their partner is doing**...helps them think about where they are in space and how they move on to different configurations”*

Pilot study – dance for Parkinson's

Elements of ballet and Indian dance

Expressive gestures

Imagery supported by music, themes and story-telling (cotton industry - manufacturing; Indian jungle)

Imitation exercises

*Imitation and... imagery I think has been very helpful for me ...I like using that side of my brain that is about that **creative** thing but it **helps me do something functional***

Imagination helps with movement in normal life... I have used the "lotus flower" movement to help with some daily tasks at home, and the "weaving" to stretch during the day

I felt watching her, that I was doing the same

Participant survey – at-home dance

- Older adults using (or interested in) at-home dance
- Collaboration with Dance for PD and RAD
- Input from dance artists, individuals with PD, physiotherapists
- Distributed via mailing lists, newsletters, social media - June-November 2020

○ Access/barriers

○ Usage (type, frequency...)

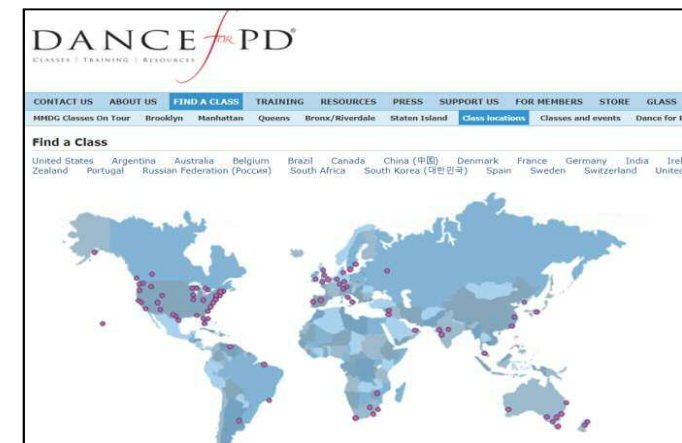
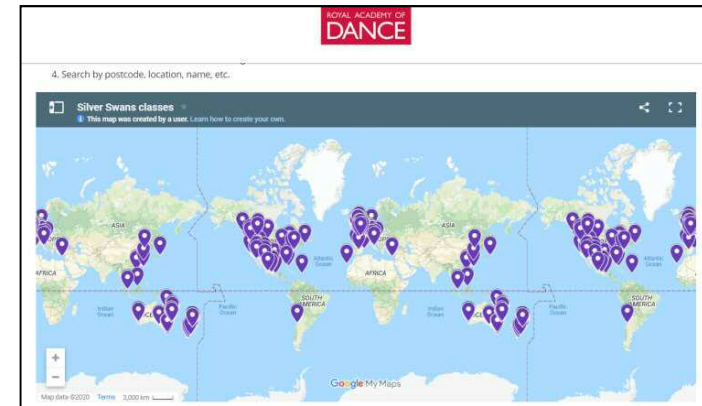
○ Strategies (imagery, vocal cues...)

○ Perceived benefits

○ Advantages/disadvantages

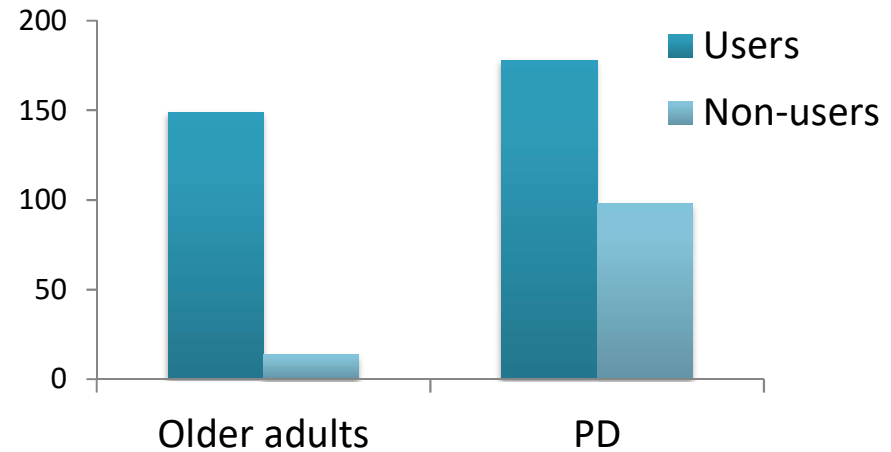
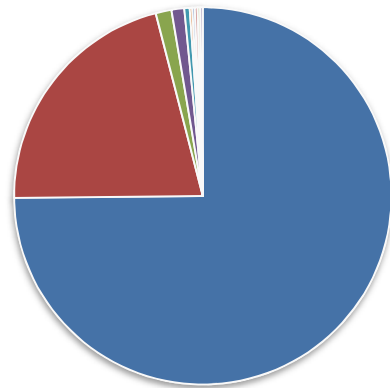
○ Future participation

○ Suggestions/comments



Participant survey – at-home dance

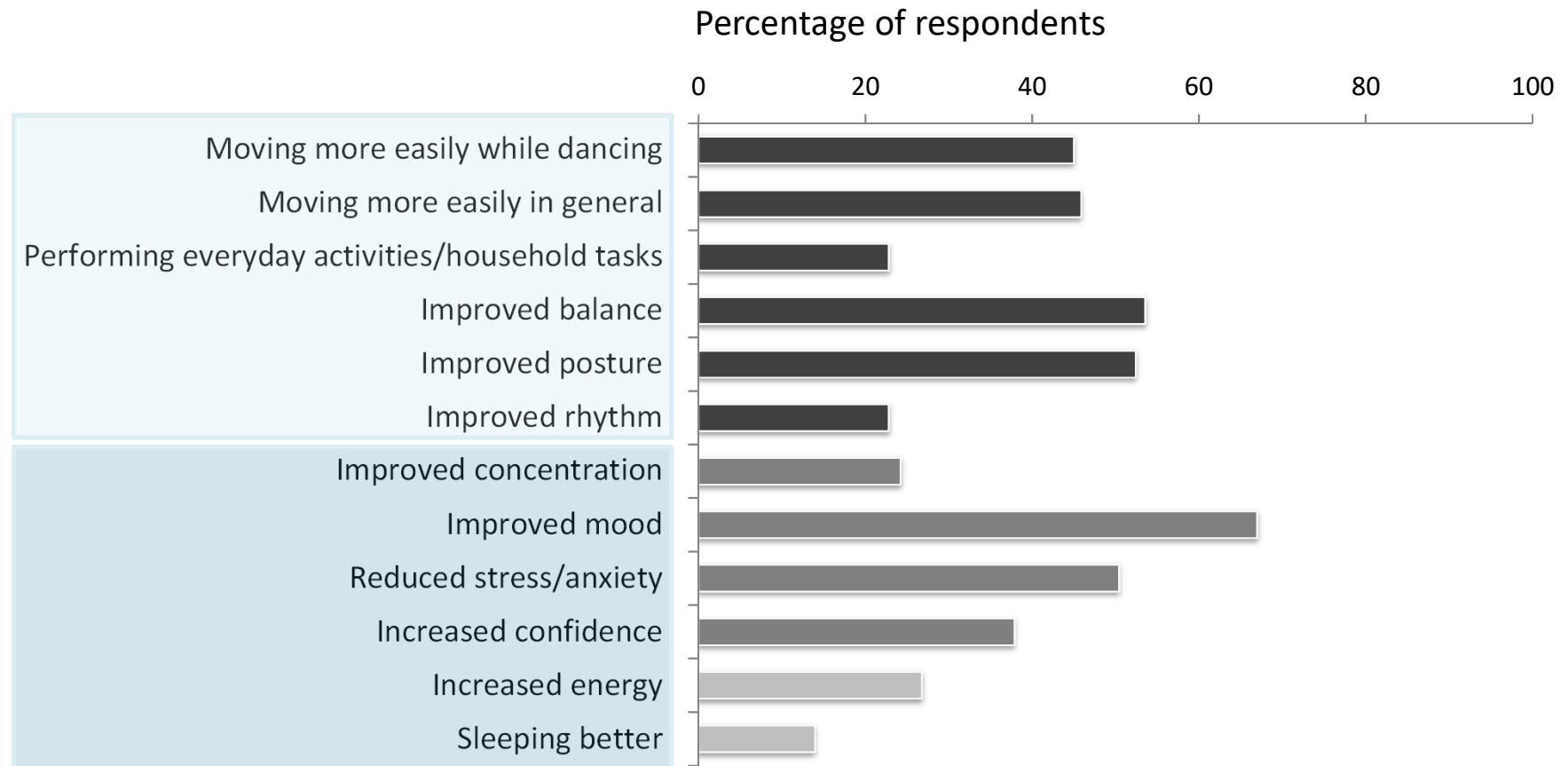
- UK
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- Switzerland
- South Africa



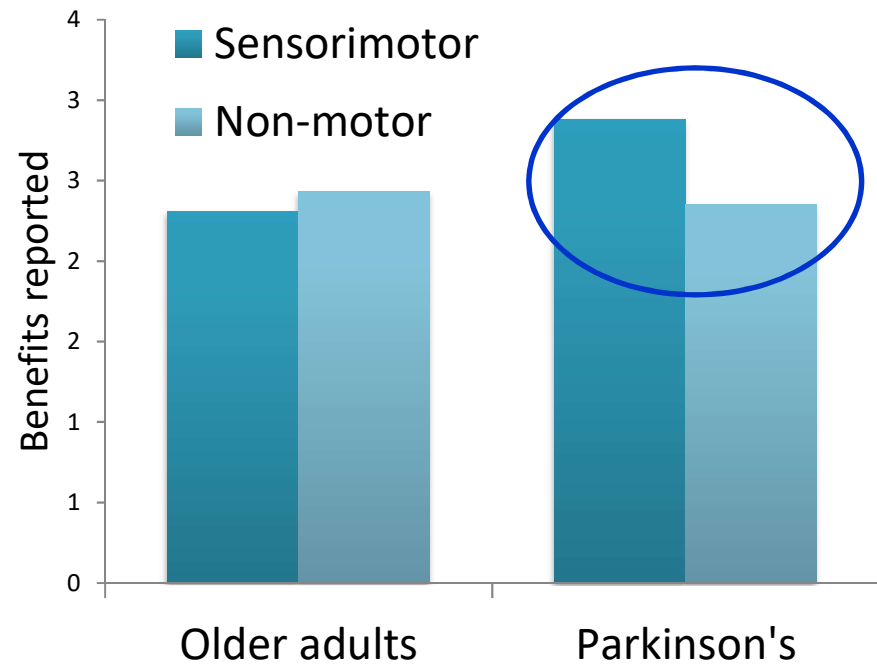
- 85% previously attended classes
- 94% practising at least once a week
- 56% using both live and recorded classes

- 50% users had some technical issues
- Non-users reported lack of knowledge (34%) or motivation (31%)

Participant survey – at-home dance

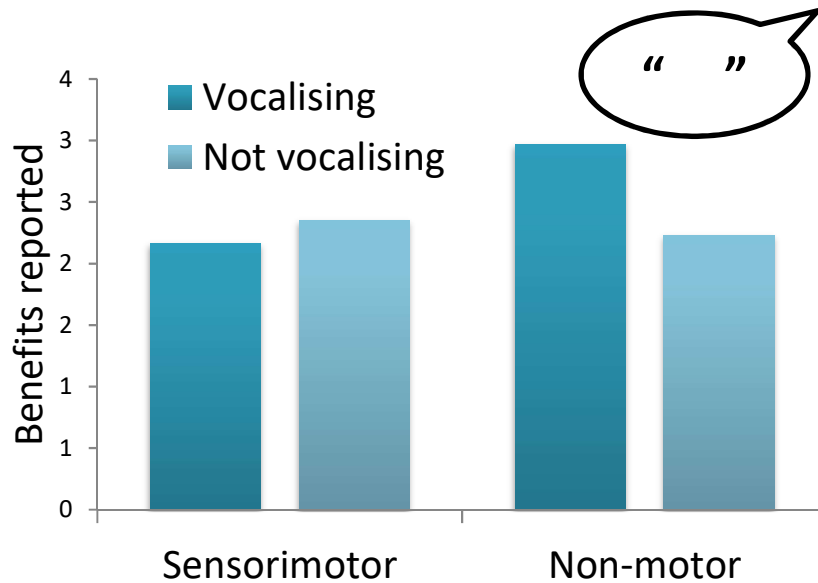


Participant survey – at-home dance

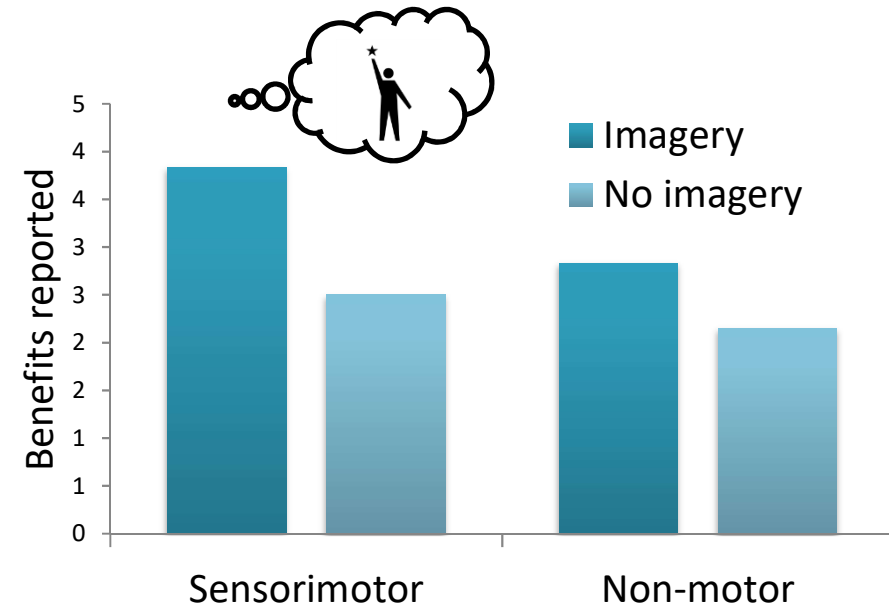


- Overall benefits - similar across groups
- Non-motor – similar across groups
- **Sensorimotor - greater in Parkinson's**

Participant survey – at-home dance



Older adults: **vocalising** influenced non-motor outcomes



Parkinson's: 'analogy' type **imagery** increased sensorimotor outcomes

Participant survey – at-home dance

Advantages:

- No travel required (**81%**)
- Flexible timing (**56%**)
- Easier to practise frequently (**46%**)

Disadvantages:

- Loss of social interaction (**72%**)
- Reduced motivation (**30%**)
- Loss of one-to-one support/tuition (**29%**)



Participant survey – at-home dance

Feel I am part of something even though no-one else is there!

Lifeline during the pandemic

- maintaining mobility
- mental health
- time to self
- sense of connectedness

*The videos give me real 'Me' time. They **have helped** to keep me sane*

Increasing accessibility

- improving digital skills
- more classes for different time zones, languages
- reaching more diverse communities

*At-home resources need to increase advertising for **racial and ethnic minorities** because its a very homogeneous group*

Training for all (teachers and participants) in using the technology e.g. zoom, as some participants struggle with this

Participant survey – at-home dance

Different preferences

- more vs. less verbal instruction
- continuous class vs. broken down into sections
- seeing other participants vs. focus on instructor

*it would be ideal to have starter videos that **break down the steps** used*

*I would like a **continuous** 30-40 minute workout*

New opportunities/ experiences

- joining classes/meeting people in remote locations
- learning new tech skills
- exploring different programs/styles
- safe space for expression

*Allows people who are physically restricted to **move freely and use their creativity and imagination** without being judged*

*I also like **meeting dancers from all over the world**. If not virtual, I would not be able to attend.*

Participant survey – at-home dance

Key messages:

- At-home/digital dance can be **accessible and engaging**
- **Convenience and flexibility** valued
- **Social connection** is critical
- Importance of **variety and choice**
- Interest in **ongoing digital provision**
- Need to reach **underserved communities**

Future research:

- Comparing **in-person vs. online** dance
- **Mechanisms** of participation – how can benefits be optimised?
- **Longer-term** engagement/outcomes
- Effects of **different formats/media**
- Incorporating **new technologies**

Working together on Parkinson's...



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Dance at home for people with Parkinson's during COVID-19 and beyond: Participation, perceptions and prospects

Judith Bek, Michelle Groves, [David Leventhal](#) and [Ellen Poliakoff](#)

Brief Research Report Emerging evidence shows that dance can provide both physical and non-physical benefits for people living with Parkinson's disease (PD). The suspension of in-person dance classes during the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a transition to remote ...

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Thanks!



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