

# A dance program to improve physical function in individuals with recent acquired brain injury: a feasibility study conducted at Flinders Medical Centre



## About

The creative arts has gained recent interest in the rehabilitation setting. **Dance** has shown **positive outcomes** in various neurological conditions; however **few studies** have investigated dance as a rehabilitation option for people with an **acquired brain injury**. The aim of this project was to assess the **feasibility and acceptability** of providing dance groups to people with recent acquired brain injuries in a rehabilitation outpatient setting.

## What we did

Participants were randomised to either a conventional **exercise group** or a **dance group** facilitated by therapists and professional dancers, and received exercise or dance therapy 3 times per week for 10 weeks.

Outcomes assessed included health-related quality of life, cognition, mood and mobility. Differences in outcomes between the exercise and dance groups were measured at the beginning and end of the program, and again at 4 weeks after the program finished. Focus groups were conducted with participants to provide in-depth information about their experiences with the program.

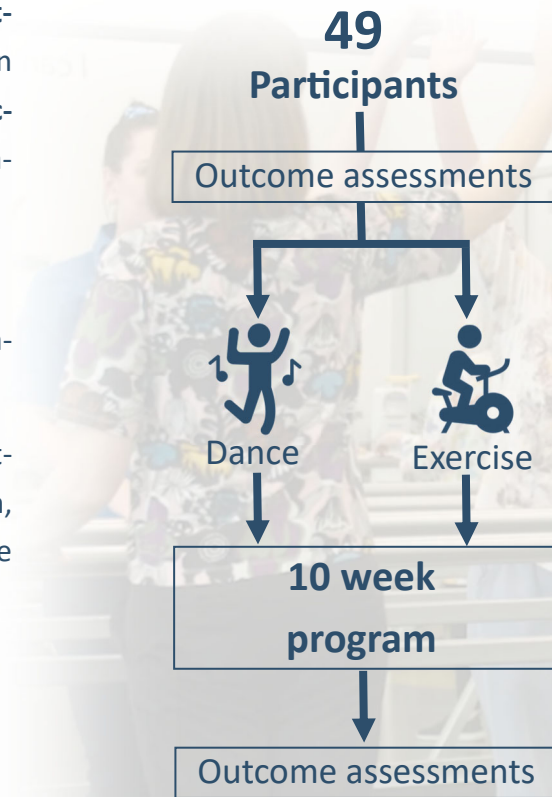
## What we found

Physical outcomes for dance therapy were **comparable** to those for conventional exercise. There was evidence of gains in mental aspects of quality of life for the dance group, including **emotional well-being and fatigue**.

Both group dance and conventional exercise sessions were **well accepted**, providing enjoyment, social connection and showing physical benefits. The dance group provided further themes in adding **variety** to rehabilitation, providing **creative stimulation, emotional adjustment and mental flexibility**.

## What next?

This study has demonstrated that dance therapy is a **feasible and acceptable** treatment option for people who acquire a brain injury. Results can be used in support of larger trials, inform optimal program design and develop training resources for students and therapists.



*"I felt happy at the end of it, which I've not felt for a long while"*

*"You didn't become one of a group, you became part of it"*

*"it brought big variety to your recovery"*