



Martha Waugh, MA

Western Sydney University

Presentation:

Dance Self-Efficacy in Older Adults

Description:

For older adults, self-efficacy for dance – dance-related confidence – is likely to influence participation in dance programs. We explore individual factors expected to contribute to dance self-efficacy and discuss how measuring dance efficacy could inform dance program evaluation and design and improve understanding of dance-related health outcome variability.

Bio:

Martha Waugh is a Masters of Research student at Western Sydney University, graduating in early 2022. Her research focus is dance and cognition in the field of public health, understanding the influence of individual factors on dance program participation and the impact of dance program design, content and implementation on health outcomes. Martha's thesis examines the differential effects of dance self-efficacy on dance intervention participation and outcomes and further develops a psychometric scale measuring self-efficacy for dance in older adults. Current projects also include developing an Augmented Reality (AR) dance falls prevention program for isolated older adults in aged care.

Martha's approach to dance and health research is informed by her first career as a professional dancer and performer, an undergraduate background in psychology, and current work as a dance educator delivering programs for older adults, including people living with Parkinson's and dementia. Martha holds a Graduate Diploma in Psychology from the University of Sydney. In her first life, she trained at Elmhurst Ballet School, and holds a BA Hons from Northern School of Contemporary and an MA from London Contemporary Dance School.

Martha's first author paper was published in 'Arts and Health' last year. She also gave her first international conference presentation at the International Association of Dance Medicine Science (IADMS) virtual conference, titled 'How to design dance programs for older adults that optimise the potential health benefits: Synthesising the current evidence'. Volunteer work includes membership of the Student Committee of the IADMS managing the Early Career Mentorship Program and membership of the Dance Research Council (DaRC) in Australia. Martha works as a senior research assistant and project manager in epidemiology and education and lives in Sydney with her husband, two children, and dog Reggie. She intends to start a PhD in 2022 on affective state, cognitive functioning, and social connectivity in both healthy and clinical populations, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder.