

Assessing the Effects of Dance on Menstrual Symptoms

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Background

During the days of menstruation, symptoms such as lower back pain, low abdominal cramping, vomiting, loose bowel movements/diarrhea, nausea, lightheadedness, breast tenderness, emotional distress, cravings, bloating in the stomach, and headaches may occur (Center For Young Women's Health, 2015). As a quick relief to this discomfort the most used form of treatment is to take an over the counter medication. As an alternative way of treatment many women have found physical activity or exercise as well as methods of relaxation therapy to alleviate their menstrual pain. When engaging in a physical activity or exercise, hormonal changes such as an increased level of endorphins begin to flood the body and act as a nonspecific pain killer. Also activities such as aquatic exercises and yoga has been proven to positively impact women when experiencing their period. Within these types of methods and exercises, there are many qualities that are similar to each other such as relaxing the mind, stimulating the senses, flow in activity or movement, weightlessness, strengthening, and stretching. All of these qualities as well as many more can be seen in the art of dance.

Severe menstrual symptoms can significantly impact the quality of life of the affected women, interfering with school, employment, interpersonal relationships, family, social life, and lead to increased healthcare utilization, decreased occupational productivity, and absence from work (Tsai, 2016). Supportive evidence has been found on both a physical and psychological scale that dance would be a great and cost effective method to free women of their menstrual pain. Dance encompasses the aspects of physical exercise through many different variations of movement. I believe implementing a study and eventually a program for dance as an alternative method for women suffering from menstrual pain would be a groundbreaking solution to this problem. There is need for more research to be done in the area of menstrual pain and dance as an alternative method of medication and cost effective treatment.

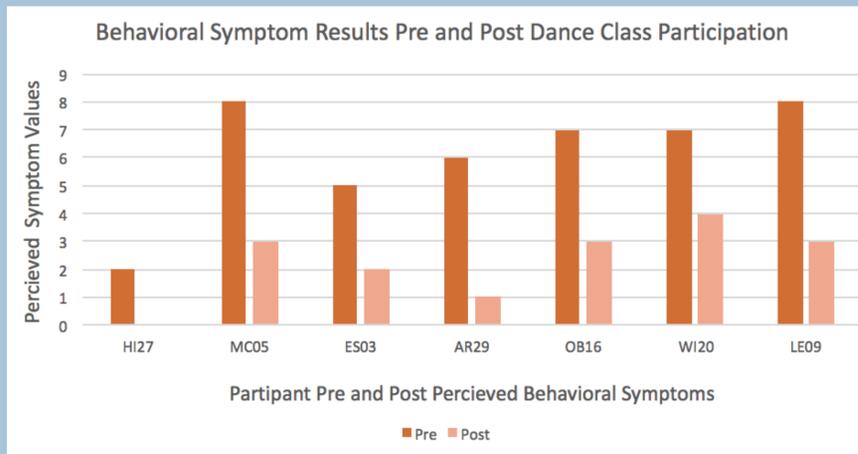
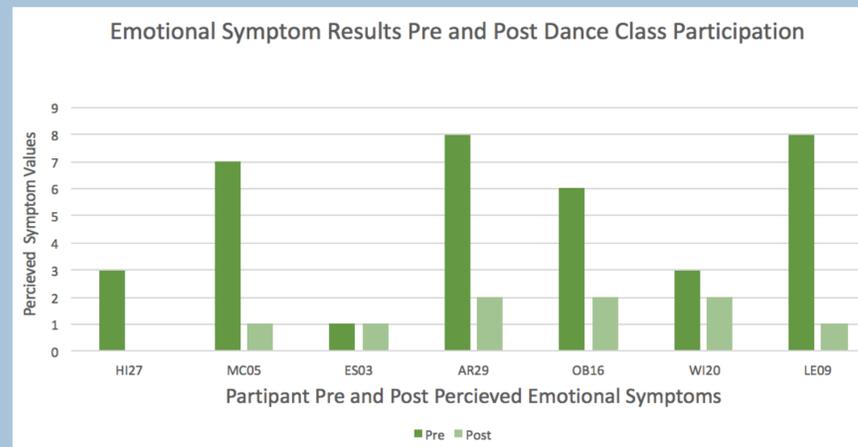
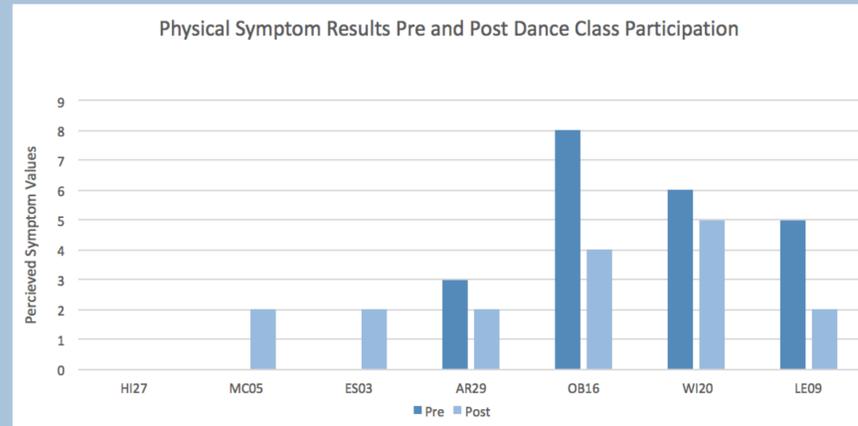
Specific Aims

The specific aim of the study is to assess the potential impact of dancing on menstrual pain and other symptoms among University of Florida dance majors and minors.

Methods

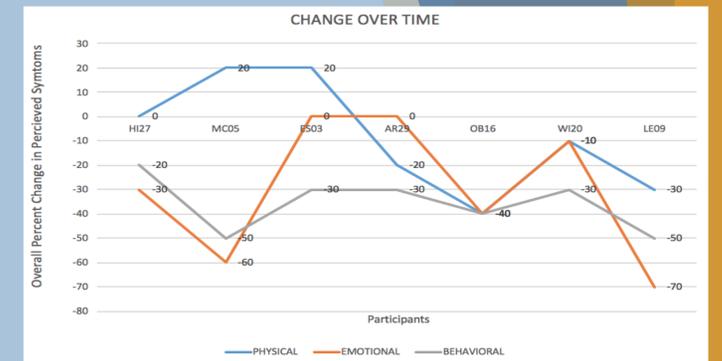
The current study is designed to assess the potential impact of dancing on menstrual pain among University of Florida dance majors and minors. Surveys administered over a three-month period of time are being used to evaluate participant's physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms during the first three days of their menstrual cycle with measurement points before and after participation in a dance class. At its endpoint, the study will evaluate the change in physical, emotional, and behavior symptoms and to determine if dance has the potential to be an effective method for menstrual symptom relief.

Results



The majority of responses have displayed a decrease in physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms between pre and post dance class participation.

Conclusions



9.5% symptom increase, 14% no change in symptoms, 76.2% symptom decrease

Although the study is still in progress, the findings suggest an overall reduction in physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms from pre to post dance class participation.

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