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## ***Music and quality of life. A brief theoretical review***

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## Music and quality of life. A brief theoretical review

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the role of music in mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic on older adults. The findings indicate that music has a positive impact on older adults, alleviating anxiety, improving quality of life, and enhancing social connections. However, the pandemic exacerbated the digital divide among older adults, limiting their access to virtual music experiences and aggravating social isolation. Practical music activities tailored for older adults, incorporating traditional and digital approaches, are proposed. Key recommendations include developing accessible musical activities, bridging the digital gap, and advocating for policies that support music-based interventions. The paper concludes that music can be a powerful tool for promoting the well-being of older adults.

*Keywords:* COVID pandemic, elderly therapies, music therapies, elderly wellbeing.

### **Abstract (Spanish)**

Este documento explora el papel de la música como herramienta para mitigar los efectos negativos de la pandemia en adultos mayores. Los hallazgos indican que la música tiene un impacto positivo en adultos mayores, aliviando la ansiedad, mejorando la calidad de vida y fortaleciendo las conexiones sociales. Sin embargo, la pandemia agravó la brecha digital entre adultos mayores, limitando su acceso a experiencias musicales virtuales y exacerbando el aislamiento social. Se proponen actividades musicales prácticas adaptadas a adultos mayores, incorporando enfoques tradicionales y digitales. Las recomendaciones clave incluyen el desarrollo de actividades musicales accesibles, la reducción de la brecha digital y la promoción de políticas que respalden las intervenciones basadas en la música. El documento concluye que la música puede ser una herramienta poderosa para promover el bienestar de los adultos mayores.

*Palabras clave:* pandemia de COVID, terapias para tercera edad, terapias musicales, bienestar para tercera edad.

## Introduction

We are all aware of the benefits of music at all ages. During the pandemic, the use of music has increased and its effect on health and quality of life has become visible. Especially in the elderly, music provides a series of advantages, ranging from enjoyment to active practice. The participants were a group of older people who saw their musical activities interrupted due to COVID-19.

Starting from an important argument about the educational power of music, Morandeira (2018) argues that it is possible to educate “through” music in adult education in university environments (over 55 years of age). Also, integrating ICT in music education can be an important complement to facilitate learning, self-learning, and musical experimentation.

In the opinion of Coulton , Clift , Skingley and Rodriguez (2015), although there has been some research on the application of music therapy in specific clinical populations, few have rigorously analyzed the potential of community singing on quality of life, related to . With the mental health of the elderly. The conclusions reached by these researchers were, on the one hand, that singing in a community group has a significant effect on the quality of life related to mental health, anxiety and depression. On the other hand, it can be useful to maintain and improve the mental health of the elderly.

Spanish Universities, explains Leal, (2011), in their state association of university programs for the elderly (AEPUM), have different agreements, highlighting cultural training, where music is a fundamental part. Although from our point of view, the programs for older adults at universities treat music education from an impractical and playful environment, with an excessively theoretical part predominating.

## Goals

- Know the possible effects of music on the elderly during the pandemic.
- Know possible consequences of the pandemic on the elderly, regarding the consumption of art and culture.
- Formulate a proposal of practical musical activities for the elderly.

## Theoretical framework

Hsin 's Chu , Chyn-YngYu Lin , Keng-Liang Ou , Tso -Ying Lee, Anthony, Kuei -Ru, (2014), Huei-chuan , Wen -li, Tzai -li, and Watson (2014), Raglio , Attardo , Gontero , Rollino , Groppo and Granieri (2015), Kemper , KJ and Danhauer (2005) reinforce the idea that music can reduce anxiety, improve quality of life, relieve stress and even facilitate social integration. In the present work the opinions, actions and attitudes of a group of elderly people who have had to see their musical activities interrupted due to the necessary confinement are collected . These people enjoyed participating in a musical group (vocal and instrumental ensemble, using the voice, some musical instruments such as the guitar, harmonica, accordion, bandurria and small percussion, which also includes movement and body language), improving their quality. of life, memory and physical activity.

Raglio, Attardo, Gontero, Rollino, Groppo and Granieri (2015), used music to reduce psychological and behavioral disorders related to neurological disorders and improve functional recovery. In their work, these authors highlight that through music aspects related to mood can be identified, reducing depression and anxiety, as well as improving emotional expression, communication and interpersonal skills, self-esteem or quality of life.

For Ahessy (2016), depression in older adults is common and often goes undiagnosed and untreated. In their research, music therapy significantly reduced depressive symptoms, improved quality of life, and increased cognitive functioning. The subjective well-being of adults can also be modified through music, as in the study carried out by Jenkins (2011), where music, among other arts, turned out to be relevant for improving well-being in people aged 50. or more.

In the work of Granados Hernández and Muñoz Rojas (2015) music therapy is revealed to improve the quality of life of older adults, in addition to other contributions of a social, cultural and environmental nature.

Important research carried out by Wong, E. (2021) in which he points out how the pandemic caused by covid has increased the probability of loneliness and social isolation among older adults. On the other hand, this author highlights the use of technological resources to improve their interpersonal relationships and overall quality of life. The results of their research show that using music to engage older adults virtually through a television program was effective in decreasing loneliness symptoms in participating individuals, increasing interest in musical engagement, and increasing confidence. themselves among senior residents.

The work of Vernia (2021) concludes by highlighting the need to facilitate artistic and cultural activities, especially music, in the elderly, to avoid any type of social and educational exclusion. On the other hand, this author recognizes the interest in opening research paths aimed at reducing the digital divide in the elderly, especially in risk situations, such as those caused by the covid.

### **Method**

Mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative). Brief theoretical review to respond to the objectives set. Different search engines and repositories were used (SCOPUS, Google Scholar and CSIC Funds). The keywords used to search for articles were in English and Spanish. A random sample of articles was selected. A second search was made to select articles that were published between 2015 and 2021, discarding the rest, however, some previously published articles were included as a reference in the theoretical framework due to their interest in the subject. A semi-structured interview with five questions was carried out via QuestionPro software.

Keywords searched: music, quality of life, adults, COVID.

## Results

Table 1 lists the results obtained in the search for articles, as well as the selected documents:

<b>Base</b>	<b>Keywords/ Keywords</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Authors of selected articles</b>
<b>Google Scholar</b>	Music. Quality of life. Adult people. covid	44520	Granados Hernández, M., & Muñoz Rojas, D. (2015).
			Leal, MEJ (2011).
			Morandeira, L.T. (2018).
			Vernia-Carrasco, AM (2021).
	Music. Quality of life. adults. covid	17,400 random selection	Wong, E. (2021). Ahessy, B. (2016).
<b>Scopus</b>	Music. Quality of life. Adult people. covid	0	
		2	None related to music directly
<b>CSIC Funds</b>	Music. Quality of life. Adult people. covid	5	Only 1 is directly related to the theme, and it already appears in other databases.
			Vernia-Carrasco, AM (2021).
	Music. Quality of life. adults. covid	284	none related to music

From this table, we can see that the documents that respond to our objectives are not many, however, research in English exceeds publications in Spanish. This is not a fact that worries us, because the indexed publications have English as the main publication language. What surprises us is that, despite the fact that covid has considerably increased research in the social field, there

are so few documents that relate quality of life, music, adults and covid. On the other hand, we do have relevant results regarding the benefits of music in the elderly/adults.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

In the first place, answers have been given to the proposed objectives, especially to know the possible effects of music on the elderly during the pandemic.

Know possible consequences of the pandemic on the elderly, regarding the consumption of art and culture. Another evident conclusion is that the pandemic caused by covid has increased the probability of loneliness and social isolation among older adults, highlighting that the use of technological resources improves their interpersonal relationships and overall quality of life.

In addition, it is considered that active musical practice is essential for the quality of life of the elderly. The digital gap is greater at advanced ages, which means, in addition to difficulties in keeping in touch with family and friends, the possibilities of continuing with routine activities, virtually, are lower in older people. On the other hand, it is worth taking into account the need to reduce the digital divide in older people, above all, to also reduce social and educational exclusion. Therefore, it is necessary to propose proposals that serve this group of people, to avoid social and educational exclusion.

Finally, it can be said that universities can be ideal environments for active musical practice, but the reality is that music, although present, develops excessively theoretically. This leads us to value activities such as singing in a community group as a significant and positive effect on the quality of life. Different studies also reinforce the idea that music can affect the reduction of anxiety, improve the quality of life. In addition, the subjective well-being of adults can be modified through music.

Based on these conclusions, it is necessary to reflect on possible practical musical activities for the elderly, which would include singing, acting, body expression and improvisation/creativity, adapting to different profiles and in an active way.



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