

# Research Workshop: Dance for Parkinson's

## The University of Manchester - 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018

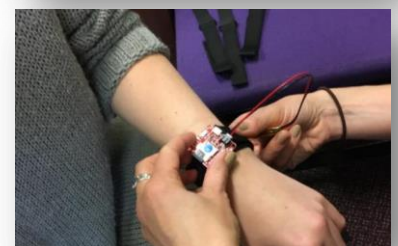


The BEAM Lab (Body, Eyes and Movement) hosted a research workshop on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 as part of our work exploring the benefits of dance for people with Parkinson's. The workshop was attended by more than 40 people including researchers, dance artists, health professionals, people living with Parkinson's and family members. The workshop followed on from a previous event we held in April 2017 to launch the first stage of our research. We are pleased to have since been awarded a 'Research into Practice' small grant from the Economic and Social Research Council and we will be working with the English National Ballet to develop our research programme further.

### The project

We recently conducted a preliminary study in the lab to explore how people with and without Parkinson's react when watching videos of dance, and whether people respond differently to different dance forms or particular elements within dance, such as emotional expressions. We hope to report on our results soon.

Our new partnership with the English National Ballet will take our investigations out of the lab for the next stage of our research. We are co-designing a trial dance class, which will allow us to further develop methods of evaluating effects, and to explore particular elements within the class.



### The aims of the current project are to:

- Identify potential effects of different elements of dance
- Explore ways in which dance may lead to positive outcomes (mechanisms)
- Investigate how the benefits of dance may be increased further

### Artist/practitioner presentations

#### Helen Gould

Helen works with the English National Ballet to deliver their dance for Parkinson's programme, and provided an interactive demonstration, which included group and partner work. This showcased the variety and complexity of dance, and highlighted the importance of storytelling. Thanks to an enthusiastic audience the whole room joined in and enjoyed the experience.

Information on the English National Ballet's dance for Parkinson's programme can be found here:

<https://www.ballet.org.uk/project/dance-for-parkinsons/>

#### Catherine Chanoux and Andre Milewski

Catherine and Andre run the Dancing Chairs Project, which provides local classes for people with Parkinson's in Greater Manchester and Cheshire. They presented a short film focusing on a participant in their classes, which demonstrated the powerful effects dance can have on quality of movement.

<https://www.facebook.com/dancingchairsproject/>



### Group discussions

Following the presentations, workshop participants gathered in small groups to consider elements and mechanisms of dance that might provide benefits for people with Parkinson's. Discussion topics included imagery, imitation and mirroring, music and rhythm, gesture and expression. This allowed people with Parkinson's, researchers, artists and therapists to come together and share their ideas and experiences.



## Next steps

We will be working on the following activities over the next few months:

- Co-developing a trial dance programme to explore different elements
- Exploring and refining measurement techniques
- Conducting a survey of practitioners working in dance for Parkinson's in the UK
- Hosting a further workshop to share and discuss our latest findings (Summer 2018)

In the future we hope to continue working collaboratively, drawing on the rich diversity of experience and expertise to conduct meaningful research in Parkinson's.

**For more information please contact us:**

[Judith.Bek@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Judith.Bek@manchester.ac.uk)



[@BEAM\\_Manchester](#)

<http://beamlab.lab.manchester.ac.uk/>