

**A series
of research
projects about
health and
social care for
older people.**



Is Music the Best Medicine?

Could a daily prescription of listening to music impact positively on a person with dementia's mood and wellbeing; and can it also have a positive impact on the carer?

Janice Caine, Service Manager,
Alzheimer Scotland

JCaine@Alzscot.org



centre for research on
families and relationships



Institute for Research and
Innovation in Social Services

P • R • O • P

PRACTITIONER RESEARCH: OLDER PEOPLE

<http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/prop/>

Overview

People with dementia who enjoy music often benefit from its use within Alzheimer Scotland's day care groups. There is limited support for people to use this therapeutic intervention at home. Often the carer is not privy to the positive effects on the person with dementia and fails to witness the change in the person's mood as well as how it impacts on their wellbeing. This research seeks to demonstrate the positive impacts that music therapy can have on the person with dementia and their carer using MP3 players and headphones.

Findings

- Each person with dementia said that listening to music had made them more relaxed and happier.
- All carers agreed it was a positive experience.
- Using an MP3 player and headphones allowed people to focus on the music, cut out any distraction and appears to concentrate the effect.
- The carer got a break while the person with dementia listened to the music.
- In some cases, the positive effects lasted for a few hours.
- Listening to music for participants with dementia relies on their carer reminding them and often assisting them with the player and headphones.
- All carers felt the person with dementia would have listened longer if they had not been reminded to stop.

