



SAVE YOUR BRAIN - BALLROOM DANCING HELPS PREVENT DEMENTIA

USA DANCE invites your attention to the results of the *Einstein Aging Study*, summarized in the June 19, 2003 *New England Journal of Medicine*. The results of the study indicate that **ballroom dancing helps prevent dementia**.

In the study, a group of 469 men and women were studied between the years 1980 and 2001. Each member of the group gave details about how often they participated in six brain stimulating hobbies; reading, writing for pleasure, doing crosswords, playing musical instruments, taking part in group discussions and playing board games and 11 physical activities including: ballroom dancing, team sports, swimming and bicycling.

The research team developed a scale to assess frequency of activities each week. For each beneficial activity, the risk reduction was related to how often it was performed. For example, people who did crosswords four days a week had a 47% lower risk of dementia than people who only did puzzles once a week. During the course of the study, 124 people developed dementia, 61 developed Alzheimer's disease, 30 vascular dementia (strokes), 25-mixed dementia and eight had other types of dementia.

The researchers found that people who took part in intellectually stimulating hobbies such as reading, playing board games or musical instruments demonstrated a reduced risk of dementia. The researchers found no significant association between physical activities and the risk of dementia – except for ballroom dancing. **The amazing 76% risk reduction from frequent participation in ballroom dancing by 130 avid dancers was the highest score of all hobbies and physical activities measured in the study.**

Dr. Joe Verghese, assistant professor of neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, New York, offered the theory that **the requirements of ballroom dancing**: remembering the steps, moving in precise time to the music and adapting to the movements of one's partner – are mentally demanding exercises. Therefore **ballroom dancing offers both physical and mental stimulation**.

Dr. Susanne Sorensen, head of research at the **Alzheimer's Society**, said "this research strengthens the use-it-or-lose-it school of thought that states that complex brain activity can build up a brain reserve that may protect people from Alzheimer's disease in later life." She warned that "people also need to remain physically active and that this research should not be taken as a recommendation to concentrate on cerebral exercise only."

If you want to grow old gracefully, keeping yourself intellectually stimulated and physically active can help. Ballroom dancing may help you to be both intellectually stimulated and physically active.

Subjects with scores in the highest third on the cognitive-activity scale had a risk of dementia that was 63 percent lower than that among subjects in the lowest third. USA DANCE Youngstown Warren Chapter #2015 President Susan Ryan, said, "this emphasizes the importance of engaging in a regular program of ballroom dancing and quantifies what may be the best long-term side benefit enjoyed by dancers. We dancers have always known about the mental, as well as physical, benefits of dance. It is gratifying that the scientific community, however cautiously, is beginning to join our team. Hopefully everyone engaged in the instruction of ballroom dancing will educate his or her students on this priceless benefit. Our challenge now is to educate the public as well."

Fitness, both mental and physical, often begins with one's state of mind. Mental acuity comes from mental exercise and if you're ballroom dancing, you're participating in living as opposed to engaging in sedentary activities like watching TV. Among mind stimulating activities, ballroom dancing is unique in that it also provides beneficial physical exercise.

Experts say it's a good idea to engage in activities that stimulate your brain throughout your life. They also emphasize the need for exercise. Many people are getting the message. That's one reason we see increasing numbers of people of all ages having the time of their lives on dance floors all over the country. USA DANCE urges everyone to **KEEP THEIR BRAIN'S ALIVE AND THEIR BODY'S FIT BY BALLROOM DANCING FREQUENTLY.**

USA DANCE is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization administered through the volunteer efforts of its members. The United States Olympic Committee and the International DanceSport Federation (IDSF) recognize USA DANCE as the National Governing Body for Amateur DanceSport in the United States. USA DANCE is dedicated to promoting and sharing the excitement and joy of both social and competitive dancing. Its goal is for everyone to dance.

