

Study into benefits of singing proves positive impact on health

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A pioneering research project to measure the value of singing for older people has revealed a consistently higher measure of health for those involved in community singing programmes.

The findings have also revealed singing groups for older people are cost-effective as a [health promotion](#) strategy.

In the world's first randomised controlled trial into the [health](#) benefits of community singing, conducted by the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health at Canterbury Christ Church University, the two year research project assessed the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness for older people taking part in singing groups and the impact it has on their physical and [mental health](#).

Professor Stephen Clift, Director of Research at the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, said: "Our research has not only cemented previous studies that pointed to an increase in health benefits from community singing programmes, but also demonstrated that singing programmes are a cost-effective method of health promotion against NHS measures for this group of people.

"The design of the study has enabled us to put a value on the results which could ultimately result in substantial cost savings for the NHS and local authority adult services."

Dr John Rodriguez, Assistant Director of Public Health, NHS Kent and

Medway, said: “I’m delighted to see such world-class research in this field helping to provide evidence that singing programmes present a viable additional means to promoting the mental health of [older people](#).”

Working with two sample groups of 240 volunteers over 60 years old, where one group took part in weekly singing sessions over three months and the other didn’t, the research revealed an increase in the mental health component score on a validated health measure amongst the group of singers. It also revealed significantly reduced anxiety and depression scores on a separate widely used NHS measure amongst the singing group.

The results also pointed towards an improvement in quality of life scores, on a measure used to assess the cost-effectiveness of health interventions, and recognised by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The project was funded by an award of £250,000 from the National Institute for Health Research’s “Research for Patient Benefit” programme and worked closely with third sector organisation Sing For Your Life to facilitate the [singing](#) groups.

The Centre for Health Services Studies at the University of Kent were also part of the research team, leading on trial design and data analysis.

Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health is part of Canterbury Christ Church University and is committed to researching the potential value of music, and other participative arts activities, in the promotion of wellbeing and health of individuals and communities.

Provided by Canterbury Christ Church University

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