

Professional classical musicians are not protected from dementia

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Listening and practicing music have been reported to have many beneficial effects on human health. The effect of music on human brain has been previously studied in young professionals but studies on the long-term effects of music on human health are largely missing.

In a new study by researchers from University of Helsinki and Helsinki University of Arts, the causes of death of performing artists and church musicians in the classical genre were analyzed using data between 1980 and 2016 from the Statistics of Finland.

According to the research, mortality for cardiovascular diseases was lower among performing artists and church musicians compared to the whole population. In contrast, mortality for brain-related dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, was at the same level as in the whole population, and even higher among male performing artists.

In addition, mortality for alcohol diseases was increased in female performing artists; for church musicians it was decreased. A surprising result among church musicians was that mortality rates for females were higher than for males in both cancers and cardiovascular diseases.

The results suggest that professional musicians are not protected from dementia. Several [risk factors](#) known to predispose to dementia, such as irregular working hours and stress, are related to the work of music professions.

The results can be used when planning preventive procedures in health care of professional musicians.

The study "The causes of death of [professional musicians](#) in the classical genre" has been accepted for publication in *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*.

More information: The causes of death of professional musicians in the classical genre. tuhat.helsinki.fi/portal/en/publication/10131/df67d9b0c661.html

Provided by University of Helsinki

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