

“Dance and innovation in health promoting care – a European perspective”

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The definition of health has moved on from the original WHO definition of

‘ . . . a state of complete mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’

to now be defined proactively as:

‘the ability to adapt and self manage in the face of social, physical, and emotional challenges’

Machteld Huber (2011)

As a result of this subtle shift away from passive patient to self-managing protagonist, we are experiencing an evolution in healthcare and the proactive search of private healthcare insurers for patient-centric solutions and innovation. Right across Europe, pockets of dance practice and research are starting to validate dance as a viable preventative health or targeted healthcare intervention.

Practitioners move the focus beyond dance and specific pathologies such as Parkinson’s Disease, Multiple Sclerosis or for Special Needs, where dance is already flourishing, to anticipate the trend to support ‘non-pharmacological interventions’ (NPIs) and focus on the role of dance and particularly creativity in order to promote health and wellbeing for larger populations, addressing such global challenges as the adult mental health epidemic and the demands of aging.

From the bird’s-eye view of the co-founder and director of the Dance & Creative Wellness Foundation, Clare Guss-West gives an overview of current developments and innovation in Europe.

Short biography of the first author:

Clare Guss-West's work integrates the latest scientific research on Optimal Focus complementary to Eastern somatic techniques in order to deliver a holistic, effective approach to classical training. Techniques are translated into practical complementary tools, integrated directly into the ballet class to produce an immediate, palpable impact on precision, consistency, balance and fluidity of movement. Clare Guss-West taught for The Royal Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Houston Ballet and the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) "Professional Dancers' Postgraduate Teaching Certificate" (PDPTC) at Staatsballett Berlin.