

# The Unforgettables: People with dementia and their family caregivers join in making music together

Mary S. Mittelman, DrPH  
Research Professor  
Psychiatry and Rehabilitative Medicine  
NYU School of Medicine

## What Made Us Start The Chorus?

- Few pleasurable activities available for this population.
- We observed that participating together in a museum program had positive effects on both people with dementia and their family members.
- We thought that a music-based program might yield even greater benefits.
- A chorus may provide an opportunity for people in the early and moderate stages of dementia and their family caregivers to share a stimulating and social activity that can improve their quality of life.
- To our knowledge, there were no rigorous studies of participating in musical activities for people with dementia together with their family members.

## Why Did I Want to Study It?

- To find out whether family caregivers would want to participate in rehearsals and concerts of a chorus with their relatives with dementia
- To find out whether I could demonstrate its effectiveness in improving social support for caregivers
- So the health care community would understand that there are ways to improve the well-being of people with dementia and their family members that didn't depend on drugs.

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## Eligibility Criteria

- People with dementia in the early to middle stage
- A caregiver/family member who will commit to attending all the rehearsals and the concert.

## Quantitative Results: Caregiver (n=10)

Measure	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)	Test statistic, p value	Effect size Cohen's d
SF-8 (Quality of Life)	15.10 (4.79)	13.30 (4.27)	t=1.42, NS	0.45
Social Support	56.80 (12.93)	61.20 (12.99)	t=1.32, NS	0.42
Depression	13.40 (1.65)	13.30 (1.89)	t=0.17, NS	0.05
Communication with person with dementia	41.50 (3.44)	41.60 (3.66)	t=0.93, NS	0.29
Self-esteem	33.40 (3.31)	35.10 (3.57)	t=2.15, p=0.060	0.68

Mittelman, M., & Papayannopoulou, P. (2018). The Unforgettables: A chorus for people with dementia with their family members and friends. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 1-11.

## Quantitative Results: Person with Dementia (n=10)

Measure	Time 1 Mean (SD)	Time 2 Mean (SD)	Test statistic, p value	Effect size Cohen's d
QoL-AD (Quality of life)	35.60 (5.4)	38.90 (5.4)	t=2.28, p=0.048	0.72
DEMQoL (Quality of life)	93.0 (9.39)	98.1 (9.48)	t=1.85, p=0.098	0.59
Communication with Cg	39.78 (5.14)	43.89 (6.39)	t=1.97, p=0.085	0.62
Self Esteem	29.50 (3.50)	30.90 (4.95)	t=1.00, p=0.34, NS	0.32

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## What Did We Learn?

- Participants attended rehearsals in spite of harsh weather conditions
- People with dementia learned new songs for each concert
- People in the middle stage, as well the early stage, seemed to enjoy themselves and learn from the experience, although they might not be able to respond to the questionnaires
- Caregivers and people with dementia from all cultures and backgrounds can support each other and bring joy to the community
- Participants were so eager to continue the chorus that they have been contributing to its costs since the pilot study ended in September 2011.

## Summary

Everyone enjoys it: family caregivers, people with dementia and the audience.

The chorus has continued to rehearse for additional concerts. Their most recent concert was on December 8, 2018.

So many people wanted to join, we have started a second chorus.

To see the video of the Unforgettables, go to <http://www.med.nyu.edu/aging/research/chorus>

**Thank you for your attention.**

To contact

**Mary Mittelman**

E-Mail: [mary.mittelman@nyumc.org](mailto:mary.mittelman@nyumc.org)