

論文の内容の要旨

論文題目 Potential use of arts activities as a community-based health resource in super-aged societies: Qualitative research

(超高齢社会における芸術活動の地域保健資源としての有用性：質的研究)

氏名 三道 ひかり

Abstract

Background

The world's population is aging rapidly, particularly in Japan and other industrialized countries. It is estimated that one-third of the world's population will be over 60 years old by 2050. As population aging accelerates, there are concerns about the health of the older population of society. Social isolation and loneliness are the major psychosocial issues among older people, and Japan has a higher risk of both of them compared to other countries due to a lack of social networks in urban settings (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2016). The challenges of old people as such involve multiple factors, which require interdisciplinary collaboration to resolve. The involvement of health, private, and voluntary sectors is essential to provide, support and achieve wellbeing of old people.

Wellbeing is widely recognized as the ultimate goal of life. Since the constitution of the World Health Organization in 1964, healthcare aims to achieve complete wellbeing, which is well-balanced physical, social, psychological states rather than just the absence of affliction or diseases. Wellbeing is determined by a positive environment, healthy human-relationships, and effective self-realization. Both internal and external factors influence wellbeing. That is, adding health interventions that produce positive emotions would have the potential to achieve overall wellbeing, and arts have the potential answer to fulfill the role of happiness-relevant activities.

In the context of the aging society, arts implementation in healthcare had effects on improving mental-health-related quality of life, mood, behavior changes, which conventional medical treatment could not address. Existing medical care had limitations in addressing the health problems of an aging population due to the holistic nature of health problems. It was essential to have the involvement of multiple disciplines, including community and voluntary sector agencies, to sustain geriatric healthcare. Integrating arts and cultural activities is one of the solutions for establishing sustainable geriatric healthcare as exemplified by social prescribing implemented in western countries.

Japan, in comparison, gives limited attention to arts activities as health promotion activities compare to other western countries. The most common arts implementation for healthcare has been in nursing care facilities with few reports from hospital settings That is, the use of arts activities is limited in therapeutic interventions for dementia care or for those who have medical needs, and recognition

of arts activities as health promotional activities is low in Japan. To address these challenges, this research focused on community-based arts activities. Specifically, this research focused on choir activities because they were one of the most popular civic activities in Japan, and their effectiveness on health and wellbeing is well-reported worldwide. I set research objective to explore the impact of community-based choir activities on the health and wellbeing of old Japanese people.

Methods

This research incorporated a case study strategy followed by an exploratory qualitative approach according to the tradition of ethnography research, which included participatory observation, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. I selected Bunkyo ward in Tokyo, Japan. For recruitment, I used a purposive sampling strategy to recruit target choir groups. I recruited choir members through a purposive sampling strategy from the choir group. Eligibility criteria for the research were for choir members to be over 65 years old, resident in the Tokyo metropolitan area, to be participating in their choir's activities for a minimum of one-year, regular attendance of choir rehearsals with less than three continuous absences.

All interviews were conducted based on interview topic guides, and all interviews were semi-structured interviews. I generated the data through ethnographic observation and interviews by directly engaging in the field for six months and becoming a member of the choir. I employed thematic analysis to interpret the data collected. During the process of analysis, I discussed its trustworthiness with co-researchers and translated all data from Japanese to English upon agreement with co-researchers. All analysis was managed by NVivo 12 ®. As for ethical considerations, the research participation was voluntary, and I secured written consent forms before the interviews. I obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Medicine, The University of Tokyo(2018155NI), prior to the research.

Results

The research was the result of 84 hours of observations consisting of 5 focus group discussions (FDGs) (n=23), and 23 in-depth interviews (each for 1 hour). The research revealed three domains from the choir: *condition and challenges among the choir members*; *subjective experience of choir activities related to health and wellbeing of the choir members*; and *unique characteristics of choir activities impacting on health and wellbeing of the choir members*. While the choir members had conditions and challenges including identity-related struggles, physical declines, and psycho-social conditions, choir activities provided three themes from domain 2 and two themes from domain 3 related to their health and wellbeing: *influence on societal health*, *influence on physical health*, and *influence on psychological health*, *aesthetical experience*, *joy of expressive creativity*.

The first theme from domain 2, influence on societal health, represented the experience of social interactions that occurred within the choir activities. This theme emerged from five sub-themes: shared interests, sense of belongings, caring for health, peer learning opportunities, resilient role models about health. As the members' involvement in the choir increased, the members created tight bonding through their shared interest in music within the choir. Eventually, participation and communication in the choir activities gave the members opportunities for socializing, learning, and self-growth.

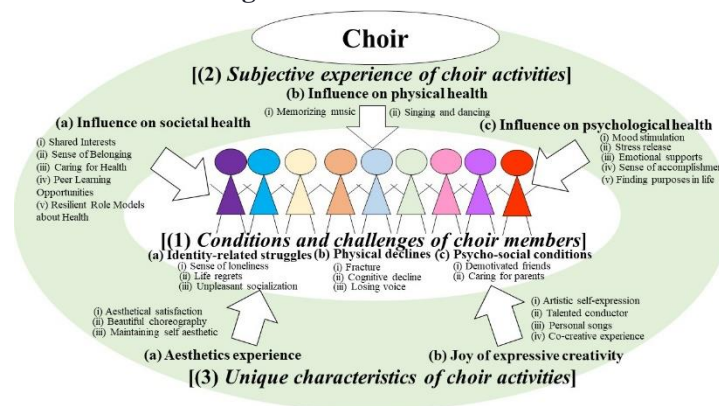
Another theme, *influence on physical health*, from domain 2 represented the activity of making music and its subjective healthy effects on the choir members. This theme emerged from two sub-themes: memorizing music and singing and dancing. The members actively engaged in musical activities and the choir activities stimulated physical ability and cognitive functions.

The third theme from domain 2, *influence on psychological health*, described the subjective psychological impacts the members experienced from the choir activities. This theme emerged from five sub-themes: mood stimulation, stress release, emotional supports, sense of accomplishment, and finding purpose in life. The choir activities created an opportunity for finding a purpose in life as the choir performed on stage. Importantly, the choir functioned as a place for emotional supports.

The first theme from domain 3, *aesthetic experience*, described the emotional choir experience that stimulated a sense of aesthetics of the choir members. This theme emerged from aesthetical satisfaction, beautiful choreography, maintaining self-aesthetics. The musical experience produced opportunities to sense aesthetics and its enjoyment while members engaged in choir activities.

Finally, the second theme from domain 3, *joy of expressive creativity*, demonstrated active and passive engagements of musical expression that the choir members involved in the choir activities experienced. This theme emerged from four sub-themes: artistic expression, talented conductor, personal songs, and co-creative experience. It illustrated a sense of liberation within musical self-expression, while members engaged in the choir activities.

Diagram 1: Overview of results



Discussion

The results showed the positive benefits of the choir on its members. Three factors associating with the health and wellbeing of the choir members were emerged from the data: influence on societal health, influence on psychological health, influence on physical health. These factors were correlated with three dimensions of the determinant of older people's wellbeing: societal wellbeing, physical wellbeing, and psychological wellbeing.

Addition to three factors described above, the aesthetic experience of the choir activities stimulated positive emotions from the members while they actively engaged in the choir culture, music, choreography with their premises-being open to new experience. The aesthetic experience produced by the choir matched with what the members sought out, and they expressed positive feelings including joy and admiration as responses. In addition to the aesthetics of music, experiencing self-expression and creativity in the choir also enlarged the benefits of music on health and wellbeing. The process of making music cultivated members to attain a sense of self, and to find a meaning in their lives.

Overall choir activities influenced on improving members' health and wellbeing. Importantly, the music and choir functioned as a health asset for members. That is, the community choirs can be considered as a potential valuable health promotion activity for older people in urban community settings in Japan.

Conclusion and recommendations

The research aimed to explore the potential use of community-based choirs as community-health resource in a super-aging society. The research results presented three domains, eight themes, and twenty-nine subthemes. This research revealed that the choir had benefits on the choir members health and wellbeing. The choir had the function of a social connection where the members connected and interacted with each other regardless of age, background, and health status. In addition to the societal function of the choir, music played a pivotal role in alleviating psychological and physical wellbeing. For the psychological wellbeing, the choir worked as an opportunity to build a new purpose for living while involving the choir activities in the late stage of one's life. As per physical wellbeing, the regular assignments and the stage performances stimulated members to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviors to achieve better stage performances.

In response to the discussion, I suggest Japanese community integrated care system paying more attention to existing community choirs nationwide. It is worth recognizing active choirs in each community as potential health resources. Ultimately, community health can reform the health promotion implications for older people.