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## A VIOLIN IN HAND: AN UNUSUAL MUSIC THERAPY PROJECT FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

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Music therapy is an excellent activity for people with dementia. In our Alzheimer Day Center in Rome, Italy we use the violin in a small group for cognitive, emotional and motorial reactivation. Sessions include a listening and a practical phase. Participants learn to play the violin in a simple way.

At the Alzheimer Day Center in Rome, we have conducted a group experiment using an innovative methodology: placing a violin, for the first time in the hands of people with dementia. The violin is the perfect object: an old traditional Italian instrument, made of wood, a living material, and with a pleasing shape. 10 people with mild to moderate dementia, divided into two groups, took part in a program of 12 weeks, meeting twice a week for 45 minutes. It was led by a professional music therapist together with a violinist with the support of a multidisciplinary Day Center team. The main objective is to evaluate the capacity to learn, both at a cognitive and a motorial level and to assess the coordination of gestures and the effect on mood and personal relations. Secondary objectives are to evaluate unexpressed and dormant abilities through the verbal and non-verbal stimulation

of the music. Cognitive, motorial and mood tests are administered at the start and end of the project. A music therapy questionnaire is given to the participant and the caregiver, to evaluate musical skills. Also a qualitative assessment is done with an observation chart. The preliminary results for learning and mood are encouraging. The findings show that the experience of playing in a group with professional violinists producing “real music” promotes a sense of self-esteem, towards a better quality of life. Furthermore, listening to and accompanying the violinist play classical music such as Bach or Verdi gives an emotional and spiritual component. The violin can be considered appropriate for people with mild to moderate dementia. In this workshop we will present a video of the project and invite the workshop participants to experience a music therapy session. A discussion will follow. Participation in this workshop does not require skill on the violin.

Bibliography 1: S.Ragni, M.Nagasawa, L. Bartorelli: Violin and mind: sn unusual musc therapy project with persons with Alzheimers. Proceedings of the 14 WFMT World Congress of Music Therapy - 2014 Vienna/Krems Austria

Bibliography 2: Raglio et al: Activr Music Therapy and Individualized Listen to Music: A Multicentric Randomesed Contrlled Trial in the field of Dementia GMA-D: evdeince and practice, Journal of tha America Geriatrics society, 2015