

**Music in healthy age and with Alzheimer`s disease.
Abilities of handling short musical rhythms.**

Astrid Söthe-Röck

Music enhances well-being and quality of life in healthy old age. In the case of AD, music therapy reduces symptomatic behaviour (like aggression or agitation). So far, there has been a lack of systematic studies on musical abilities in old age and with AD. The present study examined the rhythmical abilities of healthy elderly adults, of patients with mild AD, and of young adults (differentiating, reproducing, learning and recognizing rhythms, N=30).

The patients with mild AD demonstrated lower performance than the healthy elderly in all tasks. The healthy elderly, on the other hand, showed lower performance than the young adults in all tasks. The hypothesis that musical capabilities are preserved during the process of AD was not confirmed. Apparently, the mechanisms underlying the positive effects of music listening and musical activity are based rather on emotional and social processes.