



"Progetto Dina Scalise"



an intergenerational program to prevent cognitive impairment

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Introduction

As the worldwide population ages, dementia has reached epidemic proportions, with social, medical and economical burdens. While living alone, having feelings of loneliness, depression, social isolation and psychosocial stress can increase dementia; engaging in exercise cognitively and socially stimulating activities are protective.

The "Progetto Dina Scalise" was planned and implemented as a health promotion program that utilizes an intergenerational engagement approach to respond to such needs, while simultaneously enabling the elders to contribute to society as well as the younger generations.

Results

During 2015, thirty elderly subjects took part in the project, which involved seven schools in different towns of the Friuli Venezia Giulia. At the time (2016) the subjects became in total seventy seven: 60 grandparent-students and 17 grandparent-controls in 14 schools of different towns. After just one year, the number of schools involved and elderly subjects recruited had doubled. This goes to show that the project is feasible!

Interviewing and listening to everyone involved, we can say with enthusiasm that **-Local Authorities** appreciate and support the project **-Teachers** are willing to apply and follow it **-The Elderly** are happy to participate and well-being in old age, **-Children** are curious and open about want to have new friendship with the elderly.

Gradually each generation has changed its attitudes towards the other by reducing the social distance: young people have shown a new empathy, a more positive perception towards the elderly; the elderly have become re-creative, positive and involved. They felt important again in supporting young people to achieve their life goals.

For the moment, only a limited sample (17-grandparents students) were retested with questionnaires after a year, showing at least a positive trend:

PSQD 2015	PSQD 2016	EQ5-D 2015	EQ5-D 2016	Moca 2015	Moca 2016	Gds 2015	Gds 2016
4,8	4,6	4,8	4,8	22,7	24,8	2,8	1,6

Subjects and Methods:

From 2014 to date the project has involved seventy-seven subjects older than 65 y.o. Weekly, they volunteered their time and experience in local schools, to share moments of life, school experiences, stories, games and leisure activities with the children.

Each subject were submitted to the following questionnaires:

Montreal Cognitive Assessment (Moca),

Geriatric Depression Scale (Gds),

Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (Psqi),

Euro Qol (Q5-d).

Data was collected at baseline and for every year after the commencement of the program.



The results suggest that a positive intergenerational interaction promotes the development of a happy ageing and better well-being in old age.

The "Progetto Dina Scalise" has shown improvement in physical and psychological functioning of elders and the healthy upbringing of children.

The findings suggest that it is important that the elders maintain their social role and engage in intellectual activities to help preserve their physical and psychological health. The project, a multimodal lifestyle-related preventive strategy, is extremely practical and has many components for the elderly, such as promoting their health, as well as supporting the healthy upbringing of children against the "ageism". Health promotion efforts for the elderly must support social policy in order for the creation of a meaningful service programs for the elderly on a large social scale.

"Progetto Dina Scalise" is an effective and sustainable intergenerational program for health promotion among older adults.

References

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