

# THE AGEING SOCIETY



## RHYTHMICAL ABILITIES OF HEALTHY ELDERLY AND PATIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE (AD)

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 without AD (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.



## UNIVERSITY OF PADERBORN

Contact:  
Prof. Dr. Heiner Gembris  
IBFM Institut für Begabungsforschung in der Musik,  
Universität Paderborn  
Vita, Arbeits-Schwerpunkte, Publikationen  
Internet-Seite: [www.uni-paderborn.de/ibfm](http://www.uni-paderborn.de/ibfm)

IBFM  
Pohlweg 85  
33100 Paderborn  
E-Mail: [heiner.gembris@uni-paderborn.de](mailto:heiner.gembris@uni-paderborn.de)  
Tel.: 05251-60-5213

