

Aging Research & Creativity

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THE CREATIVE AGE Leadership Exchange
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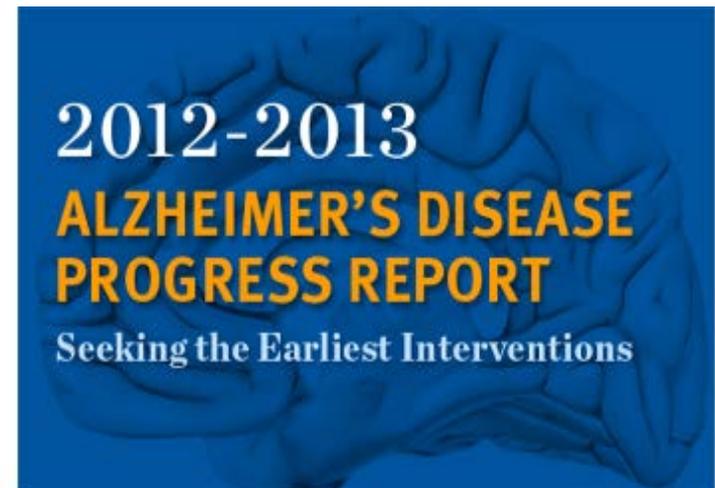
About the National Institute on Aging

- NIA is one of 27 Institutes and Centers at the National Institutes of Health
- Established in 1974



About the National Institute on Aging

- ***Conducts research***
- ***Trains*** and develops research scientists
- ***Provides*** research ***resources***
- ***Disseminates information*** on health and research advances



About the National Institute on Aging

- ***Areas of research focus include:***
 - Aging processes
 - Age-related diseases
 - Special problems and needs of the aged



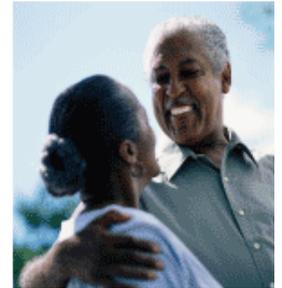
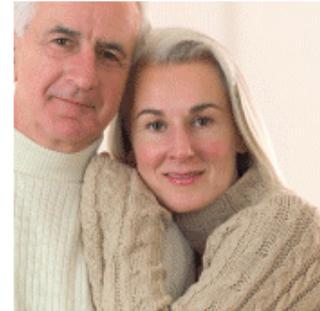
How is the NIA's work related to creativity?

- The ***outcomes*** of NIA research help ensure optimal health in aging – so creative outlets are an option
- NIA funds research on creative activities as ***interventions for or predictors of*** optimal aging



Creativity as an *Outcome* of Optimal Aging

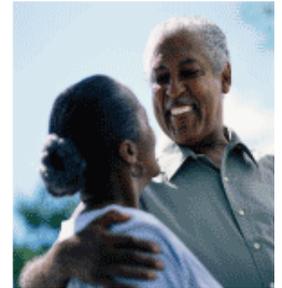
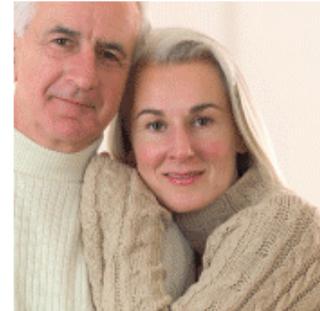
- Want to join the theater? A book club?
 - You'll need to optimize cognitive function
 - NIA works to preserve cognition and prevent Alzheimer's and other dementias



c/o Gerontology Society of Iowa

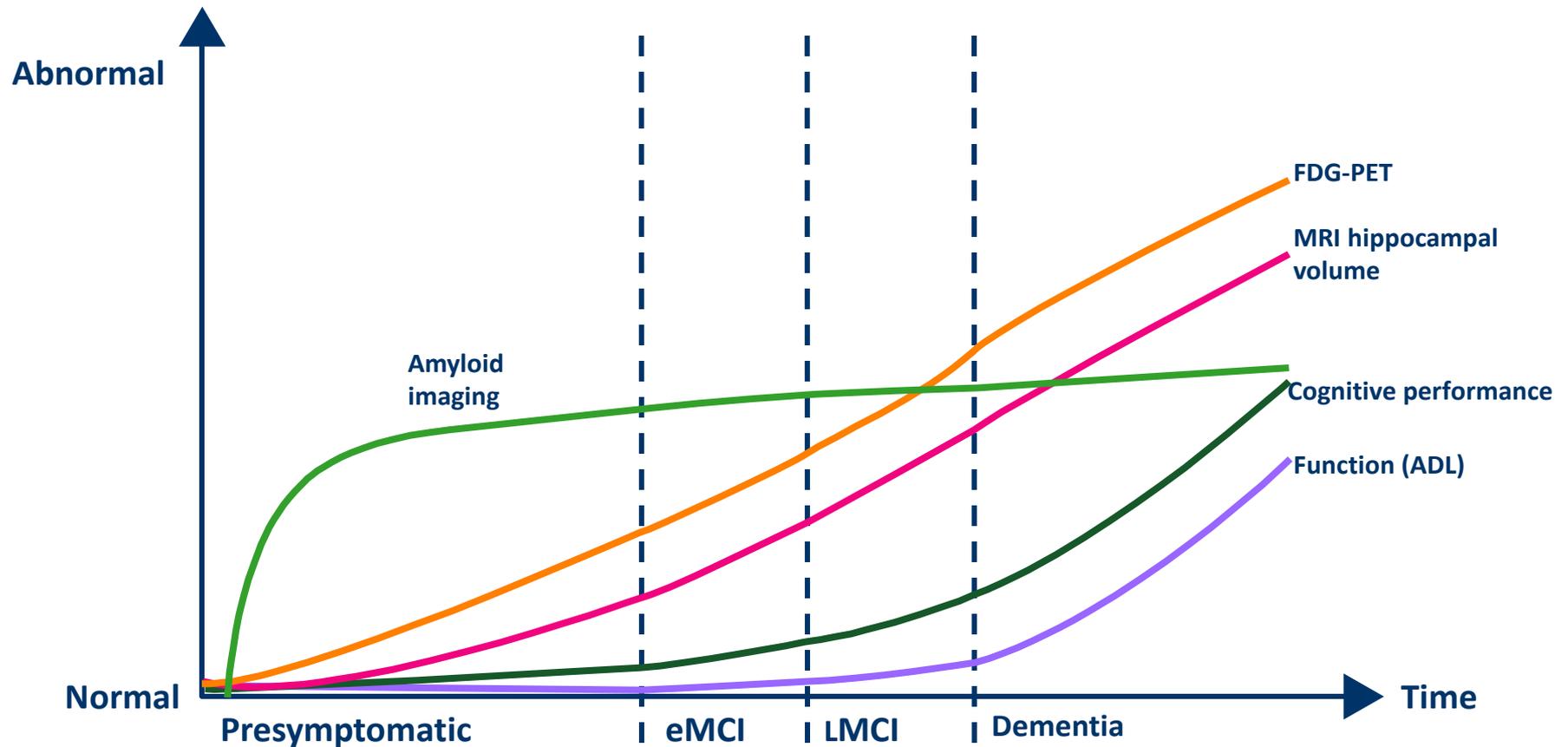
Creativity as an *Outcome* of Optimal Aging

- Want to learn to dance, to knit?
 - You'll need to retain balance, physical strength, dexterity, and prevent pain
 - NIA works to understand the impact of physical activity on stamina and health, to understand and treat joint/muscle pain with aging, etc.



c/o Gerontology Society of Iowa

AD Progression Model

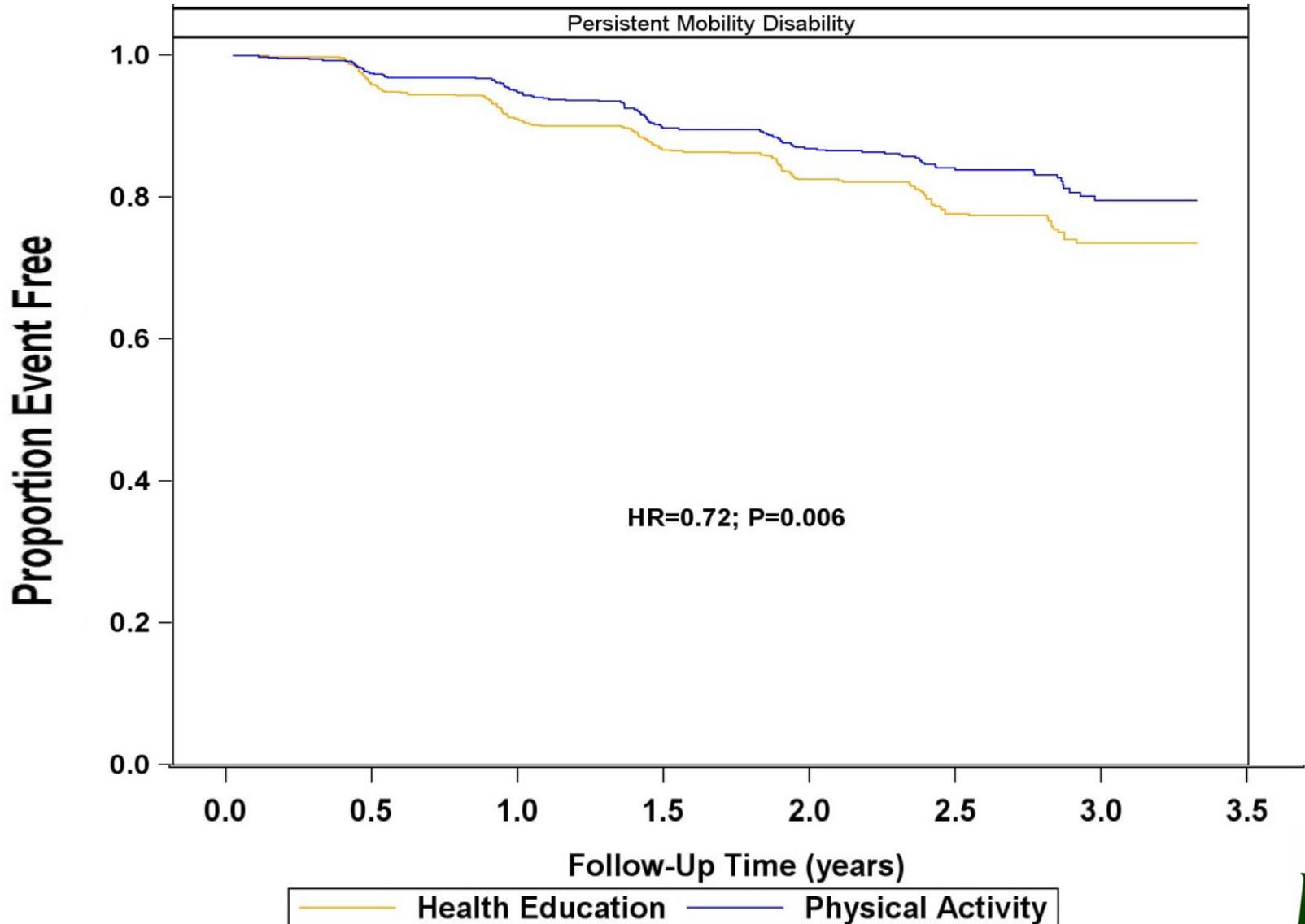


LIFE Study

- The ability to walk without assistance is critical for older people to live in a community and function well.
- A regular, balanced and moderate exercise program followed for an average of 2.6 years ***reduced the risk of major mobility disability by 18 percent*** in an elderly, vulnerable population.
- Exercises included walking, and strength, flexibility, and balance training activities.

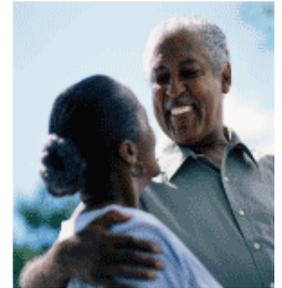
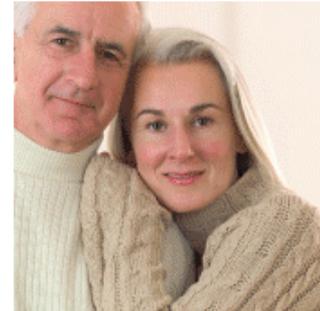


LIFE Study



Creativity as an *Intervention for or Predictor of* Optimal Aging

- Do creative activities like music, dance, etc. have an impact on...
 - Cognition?
 - Memory?
 - Quality of life?
 - Engagement in communities?



c/o Gerontology Society of Iowa

Creativity as an *Intervention*

- Study of nursing home participants with dementia
- Goal was to look for associations between various stimuli and pleasure
 - e.g., from other people, pets, social interactions, reading, music, etc.
- 25 stimuli were tested in all



Creativity as an *Intervention*

Results

- All types of social stimuli were related to significantly higher levels of pleasure than the control condition.
 - i.e., live and simulated, human and nonhuman, self-identity stimuli, and music



Creativity as a *Predictor*

- A recent study explored the effects of early- to midlife musical training on cognition in older adults.
- Higher levels of music knowledge → significantly higher memory scores, even when controlling for age, education, sex, and IQ.
- Early- to midlife musical training may be associated with improved memory as well as a useful marker of cognitive “reserve.”



Ongoing Research

- Literature suggests that participation in community choral singing may also have positive health benefits for older adults.
- A well-designed trial was needed to test this intervention.



Community Of Voices choir sings at Mission Neighborhood Center
Photo by Mieke Strand; used with permission of *San Francisco Classical Voice* (SFCV.org)

Ongoing Research

- NIA is funding a study at the University of San Francisco to test this approach.
- The results will inform community arts programs with data that may help older adults remain active, independent, and involved.



Community Of Voices choir sings at Mission Neighborhood Center
Photo by Mieke Strand; used with permission of *San Francisco Classical Voice* (SFCV.org)