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# Community-based Argentine tango dance program is associated with increased activity participation among individuals with Parkinson's disease

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The effect of a community-based Argentine tango dance program on activity participation among  
individuals with Parkinson disease

## Abstract

**Objective:** To determine the effect of a 12-month community-based tango dance program on activity participation among individuals with Parkinson disease (PD).

**Design:** Randomized controlled trial with assessment at baseline, 3, 6, and 12 months.

**Setting:** The intervention was administered in the community; assessments were completed in a university laboratory.

**Participants:** Sixty-two volunteers with PD enrolled in the study and were randomized to treatment group. Ten participants did not receive the allocated intervention, so the final analyzed sample included 52 participants.

**Intervention:** Participants were randomly assigned to the Tango group, which involved 12 months of twice weekly Argentine tango dance classes, or to the no intervention Control group (n = 26 per group).

**Main Outcome Measures:** Current, new and retained participation in instrumental, leisure and social activities as measured by the Activity Card Sort (with the “dance” activity removed).

**Results:** Total Current participation in the Tango group was higher at 3, 6, and 12 months compared to baseline ( $ps \leq 0.008$ ), while the Control group did not change ( $ps \geq 0.11$ ). Total Activity Retention (since onset of PD) in the Tango group increased from 77% to 90% ( $p = 0.006$ ) over the course of the study, whereas the Control group remained around 80% ( $p = 0.60$ ). These patterns were similar in the separate activity domains. The Tango group gained a significant number of New Social activities ( $p = 0.003$ ), but the Control group did not ( $p = 0.71$ ).

**Conclusions:** Individuals with PD who participated in a community-based Argentine tango class reported increased participation in complex daily activities, recovery of activities lost since the

onset of PD, and engagement in new activities. Incorporating dance into the clinical management of PD may benefit participation and subsequently quality of life for this population.

**Keywords:** Parkinson disease; exercise; rehabilitation; social participation; quality of life

**Abbreviations:** ADL = Activities of daily living; ACS = Activity Card Sort; PD = Parkinson disease; UPDRS = Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale

1 Parkinson disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative disorder that affects over one million North  
2 Americans <sup>1</sup>. In PD, degeneration of dopamine-producing neurons in the substantia nigra disrupts  
3 basal ganglia functioning. This results in motor dysfunction, most prominently tremor, rigidity,  
4 akinesia, bradykinesia, and postural instability. In addition, individuals with PD can experience a  
5 variety of non-motor problems such as sensory disturbances, cognitive impairment, autonomic  
6 dysfunction, and psychological changes <sup>2,3</sup>. As PD progresses, it can hinder the individual's  
7 ability to perform activities of daily living (ADL), leading to dependency on others <sup>4,5</sup>. As such,  
8 PD is associated with reduced quality of life <sup>6-8</sup> and significant socioeconomic costs <sup>9</sup>.

9  
10 Although loss of independence in ADL (i.e., disability) is thought to occur in the middle or  
11 moderate stages of disease progression <sup>4</sup>, emerging research <sup>10</sup> suggests that PD can negatively  
12 impact participation early in the disease. The International Classification of Functioning,  
13 Disability and Health (ICF) defines participation as involvement in life situations and the extent  
14 to which individuals are engaged in a societal context <sup>11</sup>. Individuals with early and mild PD, for  
15 whom motor dysfunction is not yet sufficient to cause physical disability, report reduced  
16 participation in instrumental, low physical-demand leisure and social activities compared to  
17 healthy, age-matched peers <sup>10,12</sup>. Furthermore, participation restrictions among individuals with  
18 PD are associated with reduced health-related quality of life <sup>12,13</sup>. Participation is positively  
19 correlated with functional status and life satisfaction <sup>14,15</sup> and may be protective against physical  
20 and cognitive decline as people age <sup>16,17</sup>. These links highlight the importance of pursuing  
21 interventions targeted at improving participation for those with PD. Dopaminergic medication  
22 does not adequately address many of the factors which contribute to reduced participation in this  
23 population including impaired mobility, depressive symptoms, and cognitive dysfunction <sup>10,13,18</sup>.

24 There is a need for more comprehensive approaches to manage the complex manifestations of  
25 PD and their effects on individuals' participation.

26

27 One adjunct to medical treatment that is beneficial for PD patients is exercise. Exercise has been  
28 found to improve physical function, mobility, cognition, and health-related quality of life among  
29 individuals with PD <sup>19-21</sup>. Unfortunately, more than half of all American seniors do not engage in  
30 the recommended amount of exercise, and those with PD engage in 15% less exercise than their  
31 healthy peers <sup>22</sup>. Because of this, the identification of alternative forms of exercise that are at  
32 least as effective as traditional exercise programs but foster better adherence are needed.

33 Individuals with PD report that social support and social interaction positively influence their  
34 exercise adherence, with one of the most salient motivators being spousal participation <sup>23, 24</sup>.

35 Dance is a form of partnered exercise that provides social engagement and, importantly, has been  
36 found to have a higher adherence rate than other forms of exercise among individuals with PD <sup>25</sup>.

37 At the end of a study comparing traditional exercise to dance <sup>26</sup>, nearly half of the participants in  
38 the dance group chose to continue to participate in the dance classes while no participants from  
39 the traditional exercise class continued their form of exercise. Instead, some of the participants  
40 from the traditional exercise group chose to attend the dance classes after the study was  
41 complete.

42

43 In addition to promoting better adherence, dance may improve upon the beneficial physical  
44 effects of traditional exercise. In the study described above <sup>25</sup>, the dance group showed  
45 significant improvements in balance, whereas the traditional exercise group did not. Argentine  
46 tango was found to be a particularly effective form of dance, resulting in larger improvements in

47 balance, mobility, movement initiation, and attention to movement control compared to other  
48 forms of dance (waltz and foxtrot) <sup>27</sup>. The positive effects of Argentine tango on physical  
49 function (e.g., motor dysfunction severity, balance, gait) and progression of motor symptoms  
50 were recently confirmed in a randomized controlled trial of a long-term community-based tango  
51 dancing program <sup>28</sup>.

52

53 The benefits of tango dancing may extend beyond physical improvements to stimulate broader  
54 participation in life activities and roles for those with PD <sup>29</sup>. For example, partnered exercise  
55 programs can facilitate the development of social support networks, thereby increasing  
56 opportunities for social participation outside of the formal program <sup>23</sup>. Interventions for  
57 improving participation among individuals with PD have previously been unexplored. The  
58 purpose of this study was to determine whether the community-based tango dance program that  
59 reduced disease severity and improved physical function in a group of PD patients <sup>28</sup> affected  
60 activity participation. We hypothesized that PD participants who engaged in the dance program  
61 would report increased activity participation over the course of the study relative to a control  
62 group of participants with PD who did not engage in the dance program.

63

## 64 **METHODS**

65

### 66 **Participants**

67

68 Participants were recruited from the clinical research database of the Washington University  
69 School of Medicine (WUSM) Movement Disorders Center, the WUSM Research Participant

70 Registry, neurologists in the St. Louis area, and advertisements in the newsletter of the Greater  
71 St. Louis Chapter American Parkinson Disease Association. All participants were diagnosed  
72 with idiopathic PD using published clinical diagnostic criteria <sup>30</sup>, were classified as Hoehn and  
73 Yahr stages I–IV <sup>31</sup>, and experienced clear motor benefit from levodopa. Participants had to be  
74 able to walk independently for 10 feet with or without an assistive device. Individuals were  
75 excluded if they had a history of neurological deficit other than PD, serious medical problem(s),  
76 evidence of abnormality other than PD-related changes on brain imaging, or history or evidence  
77 of musculoskeletal or psychological problems. This study was approved by the institution’s  
78 Human Research Protection Office, and all participants provided written informed consent.

79

## 80 **Intervention**

81

82 This was a single-blind randomized controlled trial. Upon enrollment, participants were  
83 randomly assigned to the Tango or Control group. The protocol for the tango intervention was  
84 based on prior investigations of the effects of Argentine tango for individuals with PD <sup>32</sup>. Tango  
85 participants attended one-hour dance classes two times per week for 12 months. Dance classes  
86 were taught by an experienced dance instructor who was trained and supervised by the principal  
87 investigator (G.E.) to ensure appropriateness and safety for individuals with PD. The classes  
88 consisted of progressive Argentine tango lessons in which participants learned a new step in each  
89 class. This form of dance involved flexible, improvisational step patterns composed of small step  
90 elements, spontaneous multi-directional changes, and rhythmic variation. Individuals with PD  
91 were paired with individuals who did not have PD. These dance partners were caregivers (e.g.,  
92 spouses, family members) who accompanied PD participants to the classes and healthy young

93 volunteers recruited from health-related graduate and undergraduate departments at Washington  
94 University in St. Louis (volunteers received special training on fall prevention and safety). All  
95 individuals, regardless of gender, were asked to dance in both the leader and follower roles to  
96 ensure that everyone spent similar amounts of time moving forward and backward. In addition,  
97 participants changed partners every ten minutes, a practice commonly used in dance classes to  
98 facilitate learning. Control participants were asked to continue the normal life routine that they  
99 had engaged in before enrolling in the study.

100

### 101 **Assessment Procedure**

102

103 Control and Tango participants were evaluated at baseline and then at 3, 6, and 12 months post-  
104 baseline. All assessments were conducted while participants were off their regular anti-  
105 parkinsonian medications (12 hour washout period) by a blinded rater (R.D.) at the WUSM  
106 Program in Physical Therapy. The full evaluation consisted of a variety of measures to  
107 characterize physical function and mobility, including the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating  
108 Scale sections 1-3<sup>33</sup> (for a complete description of study measures, see<sup>28</sup>). The Beck Depression  
109 Inventory-II<sup>34,35</sup> was administered to assess depressive symptoms. Participation, the primary  
110 outcome for this analysis, was measured using the Activity Card Sort (ACS)<sup>36</sup>. The ACS is a  
111 standardized assessment that measures perceived level of participation in daily life activities as  
112 well as changes in participation in relation to certain events (e.g., the onset of disease or  
113 disability, beginning a new treatment regimen) or over specified periods of time (e.g., in the past  
114 five years). It consists of 89 cards containing pictures of people involved in activities that fall  
115 into one of four domains: (1) Instrumental activities (20 items; e.g. grocery shopping, doing

116 laundry, household maintenance), (2) Low-demand Leisure activities (35 items; e.g. cooking as a  
117 hobby, playing table games, reading, watching movies or television), (3) High-demand Leisure  
118 activities (17 items; e.g. swimming, woodworking, hiking, fishing, gardening), and (4) Social  
119 activities (17 items; e.g. traveling, eating at a restaurant, volunteer work, spending time with  
120 friends). Participants sorted the cards into one of five categories with the corresponding  
121 numerical point values: *Continue to Do since Illness [at pre-illness level]* = 1, *Do Less since*  
122 *Illness* = 0.5, *Given Up Due to Illness* = 0, *New Activity since Illness* = 1, or *Not Done Prior to*  
123 *Illness* = 0. Parkinson disease was the “Illness” to which the categories referred. As per  
124 published scoring criteria <sup>36</sup>, Current participation scores were calculated by summing the point  
125 values for the activities sorted into the *Continue to Do*, *Do Less*, and *New Activity* categories.  
126 Activities sorted into the *Continue to Do*, *Do Less*, and *Given Up* categories each also received 1  
127 point for Previous participation. Activity Retention since PD Onset was calculated by dividing  
128 Current by Previous participation scores. These calculations were completed for all activities  
129 (Total) and for the separate activity domains (Instrumental, Low-demand Leisure, High-demand  
130 Leisure, Social). The ACS includes “dancing” as a social activity; however, this item was  
131 removed from analysis so it would not inflate the Tango participants’ scores. In the present  
132 study, Total Current and Previous scores could range from 0 to 88, and separate activity domain  
133 score ranges are as follows: Instrumental: 0-20, Low-demand Leisure: 0-35, High-demand  
134 Leisure: 0-17, Social: 0-16. Higher scores indicate participation in more activities. Activity  
135 Retention scores could range from 0% to 100%, with higher scores indicating proportionately  
136 more activities retained since the onset of PD. The ACS has strong psychometric properties,  
137 including good internal consistency (0.61-0.82) <sup>37</sup>, test-retest reliability (0.90) <sup>38</sup>, and concurrent  
138 and predictive validity <sup>37</sup>.

139

## 140 **Statistical Analyses**

141

142 Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables. Group characteristics at baseline were  
143 compared using independent samples t-tests, Wilcoxon signed rank tests for ordinal scales (e.g.,  
144 Hoehn and Yahr stage), and Chi-squared tests for categorical data (e.g., gender). Longitudinal  
145 analyses were conducted using mixed-model 2x4 analyses of variance with group (Tango,  
146 Control) as the between-subjects factor and time (baseline, 3, 6, and 12 months) as the within-  
147 subjects factor. Planned pairwise comparisons were used to characterize change over time within  
148 each group. An intent-to-treat analysis was employed including all participants who completed  
149 the baseline and 3-month evaluation and carrying forward last recorded data for those who  
150 dropped out after this point. A significance level of 0.05 was used in all statistical analyses, and  
151 p-values < 0.10 were considered trends.

152

## 153 **RESULTS**

154

### 155 **Participant characteristics**

156

157 Sixty-two individuals with idiopathic PD (30 Control, 32 Tango) enrolled in this study, were  
158 randomized to treatment group and completed the baseline evaluation. Fifty-two participants (26  
159 Control, 26 Tango) completed the 3-month evaluation and were included in the current analysis  
160 (Figure 1). Sample characteristics are presented in Table 1. There were no differences between

161 the Tango and Control groups at baseline with regards to gender, age, duration and severity of  
162 PD, or depressive symptoms (all  $p \geq 0.25$ )

163

#### 164 **Activity Participation**

165

166 *Current Participation.* There were no group differences in Current participation at baseline for  
167 Total activities or for the separate activity domains (all  $p \geq 0.15$ ). There was an effect of time,  
168  $F(3, 48) = 2.78, p = 0.04$ , and a trend for a time by group interaction in Total Current  
169 participation,  $F(3, 48) = 2.55, p = 0.06$  (Figure 2). Planned comparisons indicated that there was  
170 a main effect of time in the Tango group,  $F(3, 48) = 4.05, p = 0.01$ , but not the Control group,  
171  $F(3, 48) = 0.96, p = 0.42$ . Specifically, the Total Current participation of the Tango group was  
172 higher at 3, 6, and 12 months compared to baseline (all  $p \leq 0.008$ ), while the Control group did  
173 not change (all  $p \geq 0.11$ ). Analysis of the separate activity domains (Figure 3) showed a similar  
174 pattern for Low-demand Leisure activities, such that there was a main effect of time for the  
175 Tango group,  $F(3, 48) = 4.75, p = 0.006$ , but not for the Control group,  $F(3, 48) = 1.36, p = 0.27$ .  
176 Low-demand Leisure participation was higher in the Tango group at 3, 6, and 12 months  
177 compared to baseline (all  $p \leq 0.03$ ), while the Control group did not change (all  $p \geq 0.50$ ). There  
178 were no significant effects for High-demand Leisure, Instrumental or Social activities (all  $p \geq$   
179 0.11).

180

181 *Activity Retention since PD Onset.* There was a main effect of time for Total Activity Retention,  
182  $F(3, 48) = 3.70, p = 0.02$ . The time by group interaction did not reach significance ( $p = 0.15$ );  
183 however, as with Total Current Participation, planned comparisons revealed a significant effect

184 of time within the Tango group,  $F(3, 48) = 4.68, p = 0.006$ , but not the Control group,  $F(3, 48) =$   
185  $0.631, p = 0.60$  (Figure 4). Over the course of the study, the percentage of pre-PD activities  
186 engaged in by the Tango group increased from 77% to 90%, whereas the Control group remained  
187 around 80%. Analysis of the separate activity domains (Figure 5) revealed significant effects of  
188 time on Instrumental and Low-demand Leisure Activity Retention in the Tango group,  $F_s \geq 3.7,$   
189  $p_s \leq 0.02$ , but not the Control group,  $F_s < 0.47, p \geq 0.70$ . Percentage of pre-PD Instrumental  
190 activities increased from 76% at baseline to 87% at 3 months before declining to 81% at 12  
191 months in the Tango group but remained around 80% in the Control group. Percentage of pre-PD  
192 Low-demand Leisure activities increased from 79% to 106% in the Tango group but remained at  
193 84% in the Control group. This indicates that the Tango participants reported engaging in *more*  
194 Low-demand Leisure activities at the end of the study compared to before the onset of PD. There  
195 was an effect of time for Social Activity Retention,  $F(1, 50) = 13.75, p = 0.001$ . Percentage of  
196 pre-PD Social activities in the Tango group increased from 85% at baseline to 94% and 102% at  
197 3 and 6 months, respectively, before declining to 89% at 12 months,  $F(3, 48) = 4.83, p = 0.005$ .  
198 After an initial increase from 85% at baseline to 90% at 3 months in the Control group, there was  
199 a decline to 82% at 12 months,  $F(3, 48) = 2.61, p = 0.06$ . There were no significant effects for  
200 High-demand Leisure Activity Retention (all  $p \geq 0.25$ ).

201  
202 *New Activities.* There was a main effect of time on New Activity participation,  $F(3, 48) = 9.83, p$   
203  $< 0.001$ , such that both groups reported more new activities at 3, 6, and 12 months compared to  
204 baseline (all  $p \leq 0.001$ ) (Figure 6). On average, the Tango group reported 2.6 ( $SD = 3.9$ ) new  
205 activities at each time point and the Control group reported 1.4 ( $SD = 3.6$ ). The effect of time  
206 was significant for each activity domain,  $F_s \geq 5.46, p_s < 0.01$  (Figure 7). However, for New

207 Social activities, it was qualified by a time by group interaction,  $F(3, 48) = 4.26, p = 0.03$ , such  
208 that there was a significant effect of time in the Tango group,  $F(3, 48) = 5.38, p = 0.003$ , but not  
209 the Control group,  $F(3, 48) = 0.47, p = 0.71$ . The Tango group gained a significant number of  
210 new Social activities from baseline to 3, 6, and 12 months ( $M = 0.5, SD = 1.1; ps < 0.001$ ) but the  
211 Control group did not ( $M = 0.15, SD = 0.48; ps \geq 0.31$ ).

212

## 213 **DISCUSSION**

214

215 The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a community-based Argentine tango  
216 dance program on activity participation among individuals with PD. Volunteers with PD were  
217 randomized to participate in 12 months of Argentine tango classes (Tango group) or to continue  
218 their daily routine as usual (Control group). As hypothesized, participants in the Tango group  
219 reported increased activity participation over the course of the study. Moreover, they recovered a  
220 significant proportion of the activities they had lost since the onset of PD. Activity participation  
221 among individuals in the Control group remained relatively stable.

222

223 Our results extend previous work<sup>28</sup> and suggest that in addition to improving physical function  
224 among individuals with PD, socially engaging and functional, skill-based exercise promotes  
225 participation in instrumental, leisure and social activities. The changes in participation observed  
226 in the Tango group appear to be driven by a combination of increased engagement in prior  
227 activities done less or given up since the onset of PD as well as engagement in novel activities.  
228 The only activity domain for which participation did not increase in the Tango group relative to  
229 the Control group was High-demand Leisure. Tango participants were required to attend the

230 dance classes and, as such, were engaging in a high-demand leisure activity that was not  
231 captured by our outcome measure (because this item was removed); however, they did not report  
232 participating in additional exercise activities outside of the dance classes. There are a number of  
233 potential reasons for this, including lack of opportunities or access to exercise or being satisfied  
234 with the level of exercise offered by the dance classes. Regardless, by engaging in more  
235 instrumental, low-demand leisure and social activities, participants in the Tango group did boost  
236 their overall level of physical activity, which simply requires bodily movement that increases  
237 energy expenditure above the basal level and can include occupational, household,  
238 transportation, and leisure activities <sup>39</sup>.

239  
240 Of the separate activity domains, Low-demand Leisure showed the most consistent  
241 improvements, with Tango participants engaging in more of these types of activities by the end  
242 of the study than they had before the onset of PD. This outcome is significant, as participation in  
243 low-demand leisure activities has been associated with improved mental health in older adults <sup>14</sup>.  
244 It is important to note that while the activities in this domain are not as physically demanding as  
245 those in the High-demand Leisure domain, many place significant demand on mobility (e.g.,  
246 going to the museum, recreational shopping) or other functions affected by PD such as cognition  
247 and fine motor coordination (e.g., games, puzzles, needlecrafts). Some also involve social  
248 interaction. Thus, rather than representing the adoption of a more sedentary lifestyle, increased  
249 low-demand leisure participation may reflect a higher level of daily challenge and engagement  
250 for individuals with PD.

251

252 There are a number of ways in which Argentine tango could positively influence activity  
253 participation in PD. As a form of physical exercise, it benefits PD-related mobility impairments  
254 and may even slow disease progression (for a discussion of these effects, refer to <sup>28</sup>), which could  
255 result in improved capacity for daily performance and participation. Importantly, progressive  
256 tango classes have features that may additively benefit participation compared to traditional  
257 exercise. For example, tango requires working memory, control of attention and multitasking to  
258 integrate newly learned and previously learned dance elements, stay in rhythm with the music,  
259 and maneuver around others on the dance floor. Leading requires self-initiated movements and  
260 motor planning while following requires reading and responding appropriately to the leader's  
261 body cues <sup>25</sup>. These cognitive challenges may further improve capacity for daily performance  
262 and result in increases in, or maintenance of, participation.

263  
264 The social interaction, social support and social influences that emerged from the tango classes  
265 likely also had positive effects on participation. The group setting provided an opportunity for  
266 social modeling, the establishment and reinforcement of social norms regarding health-  
267 promoting behavior, and the development of social networks <sup>40</sup>. In fact, participants in the Tango  
268 group reported engaging in social activities together outside of class, including attending a play,  
269 the symphony, and a social dance. On an individual level, the presence of a partner may have  
270 helped those with PD to feel more comfortable challenging themselves in the complexity and  
271 difficulty of movements <sup>27</sup>, thereby providing the opportunity for mastery experiences, a primary  
272 source of self-efficacy <sup>41</sup>. Improvements in self-efficacy that occurred during the tango classes  
273 could have translated to daily life, cultivating the desire to go out and engage in more or new

274 activities, re-try activities that had been given up, or devote the necessary effort and persistence  
275 required to maintain one's current level of activity.

276

### 277 **Study Limitations**

278

279 There was no control for attention and social interaction across groups, so it is possible that the  
280 changes in participation observed in the Tango group were due to non-specific effects of  
281 socializing. However, studies in older adults have shown that exercise outcomes are more  
282 strongly predicted by the social cognitive factors associated with exercise, such as improved self-  
283 efficacy, rather than by social interaction alone<sup>42</sup>. Thus, we propose that the improvements in  
284 participation in the Tango group are larger than what would occur from socialization alone.

285 Future studies should incorporate a social control group and measure social cognitive factors to  
286 provide stronger support for this conclusion.

287

288 Our attrition rate was relatively high compared to previous exercise studies in PD<sup>43,44</sup>. Attrition  
289 may have been a function of the research study rather than of the intervention itself. Participation  
290 in the study required four off all antiparkinsonian medication evaluations at a separate location  
291 from the dance class. This feature likely added a level of burden or discomfort that would not be  
292 present in a community-based dance program alone. Importantly, the Tango participants who  
293 completed the entire study were actively engaged in the intervention as evidenced by an average  
294 of nearly 80% attendance to all classes. This adherence rate is good compared to other 12-month  
295 exercise trials in older adults<sup>e.g., 45</sup>. Furthermore, most of these participants (13/16) chose to  
296 continue attending the dance classes after the study was over. Thus, dance appears to be an

297 enjoyable and highly motivating form of physical activity for some people with PD. Formalized  
298 follow up, perhaps using the ACS with the “dancing” item re-incorporated, would provide  
299 support for this notion and help to determine longer term effects of the intervention. Consistent  
300 with the notion that a one-size-fits-all approach to promoting exercise will not be efficacious, but  
301 instead, that exercise recommendations should be tailored to individuals’ needs, desires and  
302 barriers <sup>46</sup>, these findings suggests the need for continued identification of alternative, effective  
303 forms of exercise for the diverse population of individuals with PD.

304

305 While the ACS provides a broad picture of a person’s perceived participation in complex daily  
306 activities, it may not have fully captured all changes in participation in our sample. For example,  
307 it allows for the measurement of New Activities but does not include a “Do More” category, and  
308 therefore cannot account for increased participation in existing activities. In addition, the ACS  
309 does not provide information regarding factors such as length of time spent engaged in activities,  
310 the relative importance of activities to people, satisfaction with participation, or difficulty  
311 experienced while performing activities. Participation is a complex and multidimensional  
312 construct. The present study has provided initial support for the efficacy of community-based  
313 dance for improving participation among individuals with PD. Future work can investigate the  
314 nature of changes in participation that are occurring as well as the relative importance of the  
315 various facets of participation to overall health and well-being in PD.

316

## 317 **CONCLUSIONS**

318 In summary, we found that engagement in a community-based Argentine tango dance class is  
319 associated with increased activity participation among individuals with PD. To our knowledge,

320 this is the first study to test the effect of any intervention on activity participation in this  
321 population. Rehabilitation research in PD primarily focuses on motor impairment and physical  
322 disability, measuring outcomes at the level of functional mobility and self-care ADL. Given its  
323 importance for health and well-being<sup>14, 16, 47</sup>, optimal participation in all the activities and roles  
324 of daily life should be the ultimate goal of rehabilitation for PD and should be a primary outcome  
325 in intervention studies. Our findings suggest that dance, a socially-engaging form of exercise,  
326 should be included in the clinical management of PD. Future work should examine longer term  
327 effects of the intervention and investigate the potential biological and psychosocial mechanisms  
328 underlying the benefits of dance for individuals with PD.

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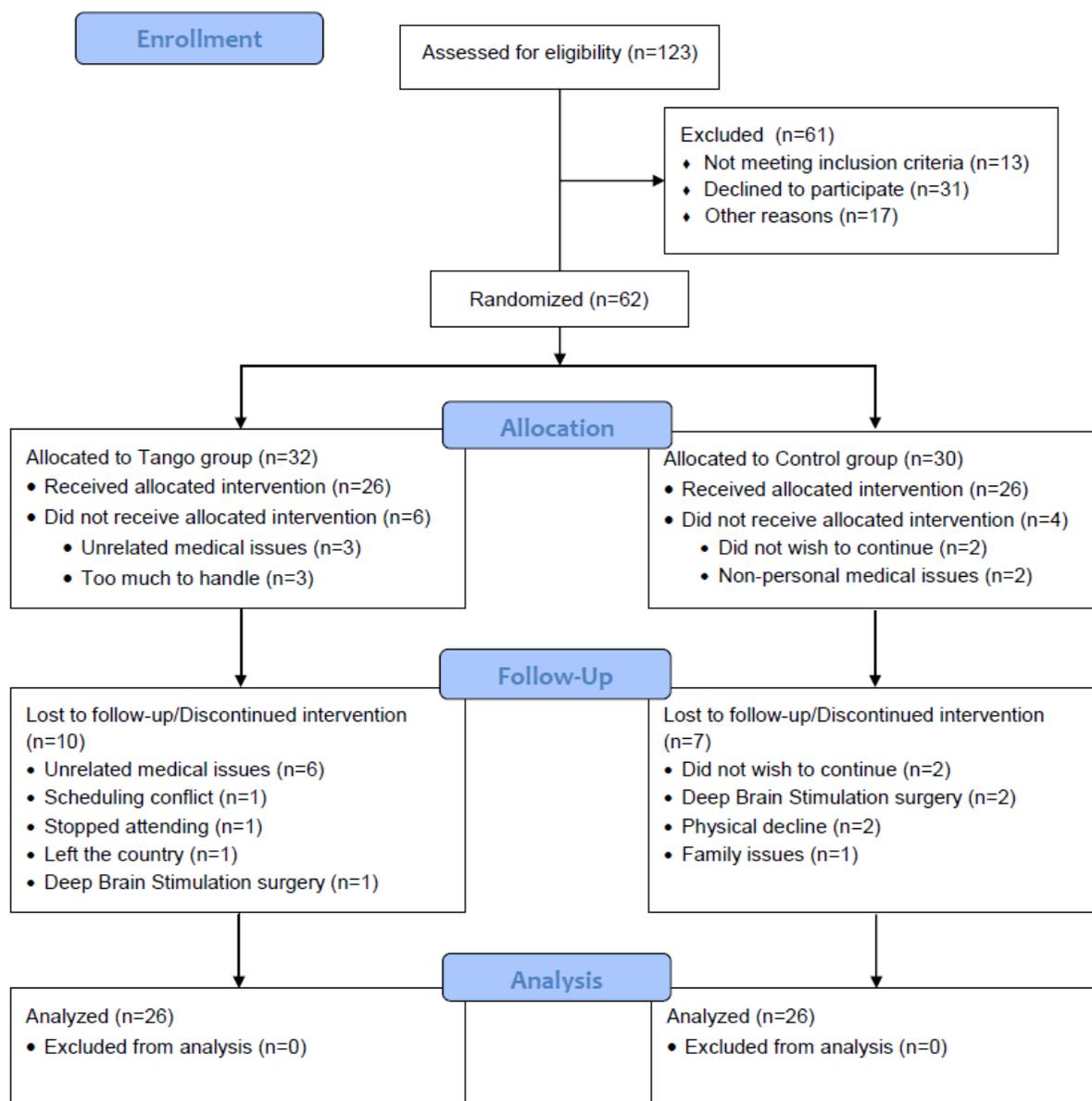
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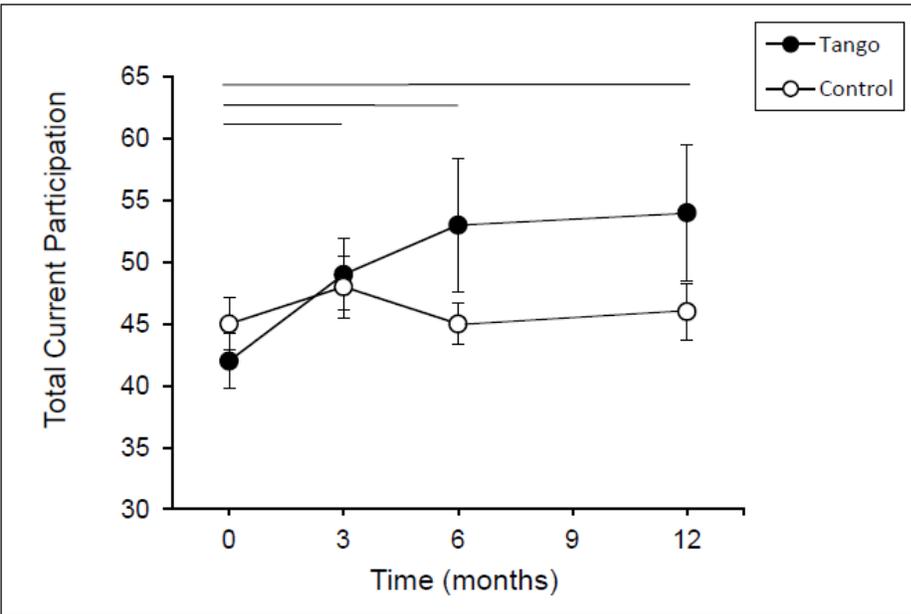
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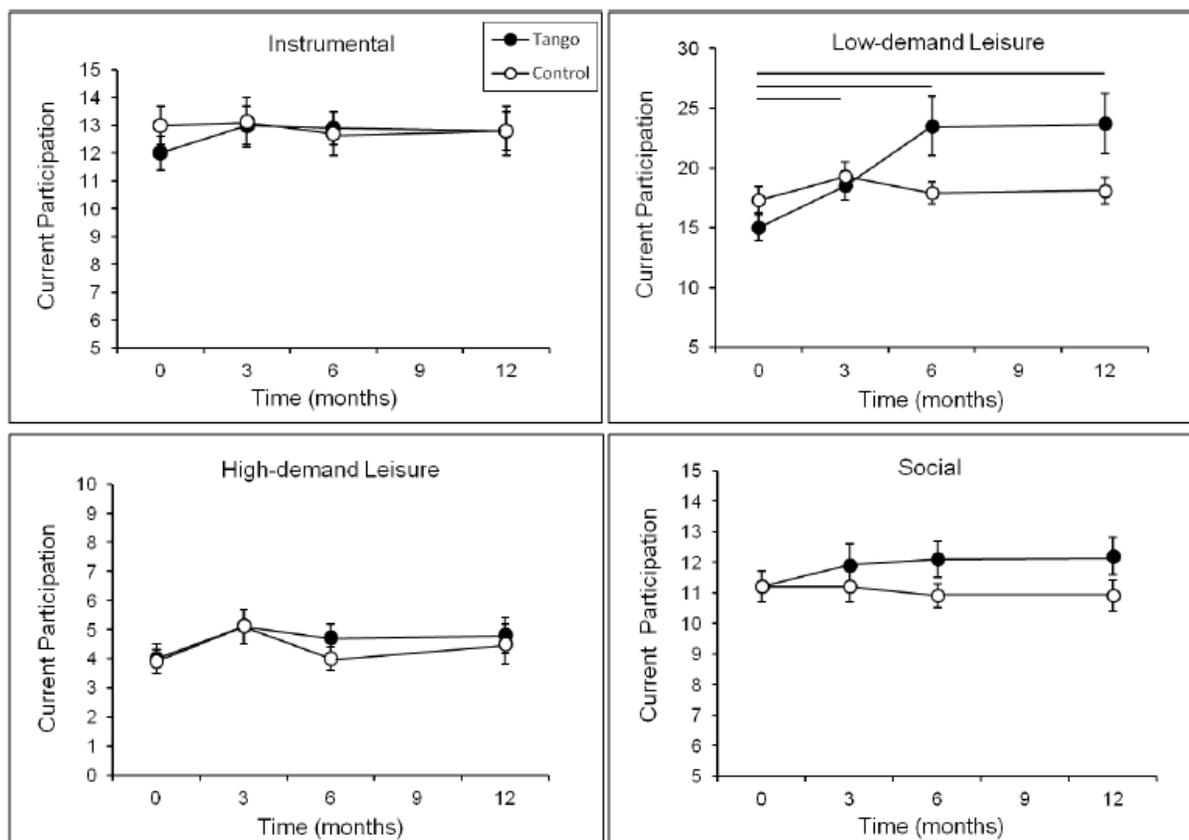
## Figures



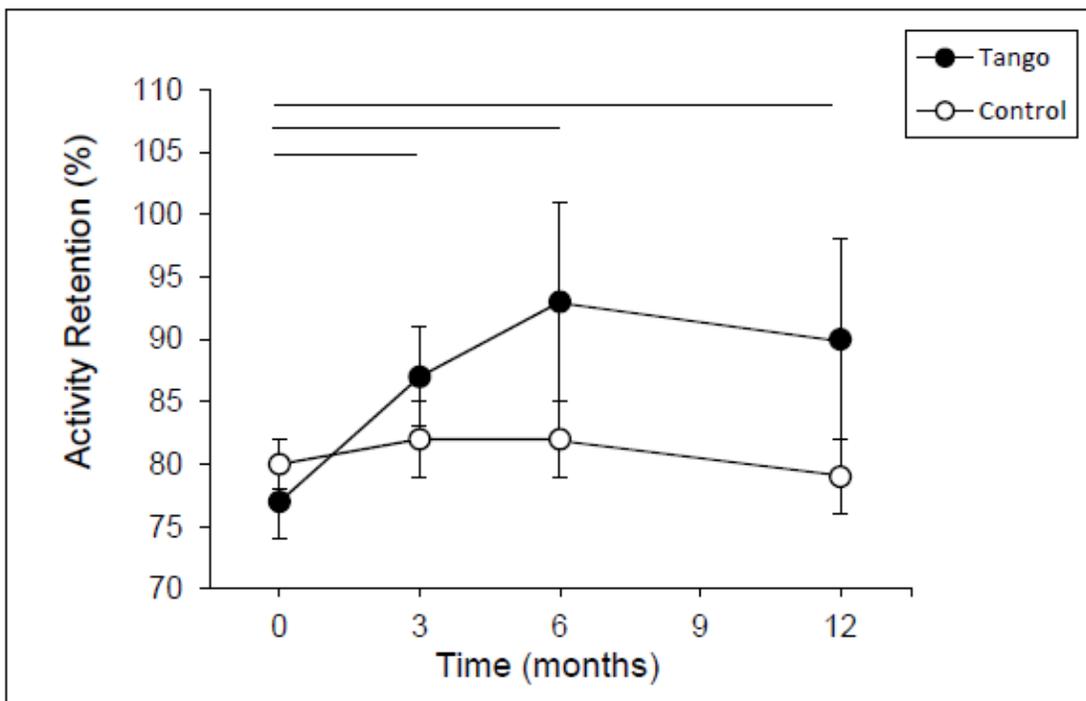
*Figure 1.* CONSORT flow diagram illustrating participant recruitment, randomization, and attrition. All participants retained through 3 months were included in the final analyzed sample; last observations from those who dropped out after 3 months were carried forward for intent-to-treat analysis.



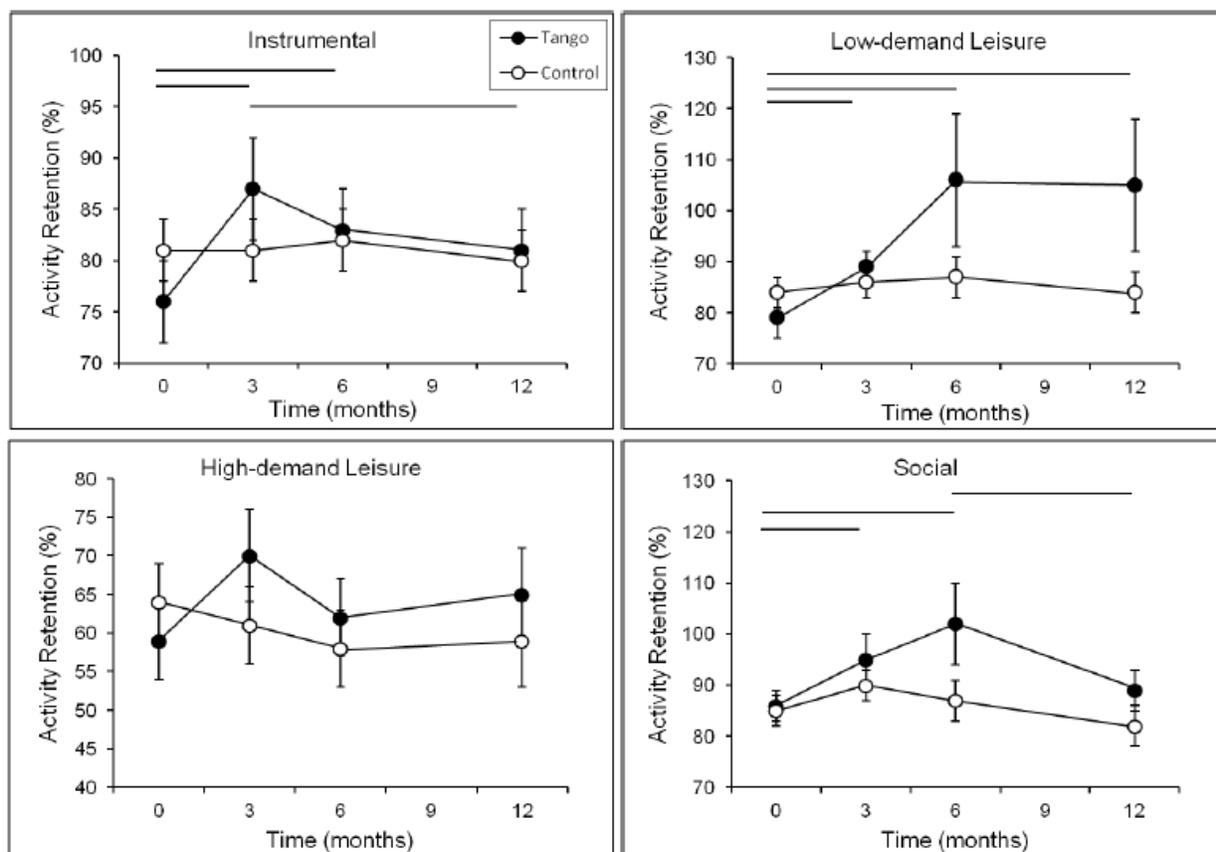
*Figure 2.* Total Current Participation scores on the Activity Card Sort (ACS) at baseline, 3-, 6-, and 12-month evaluations for the Tango and Control groups. Values are means  $\pm$  SEs. Horizontal lines indicate a significant difference within the Tango group between the time points spanned by the line.



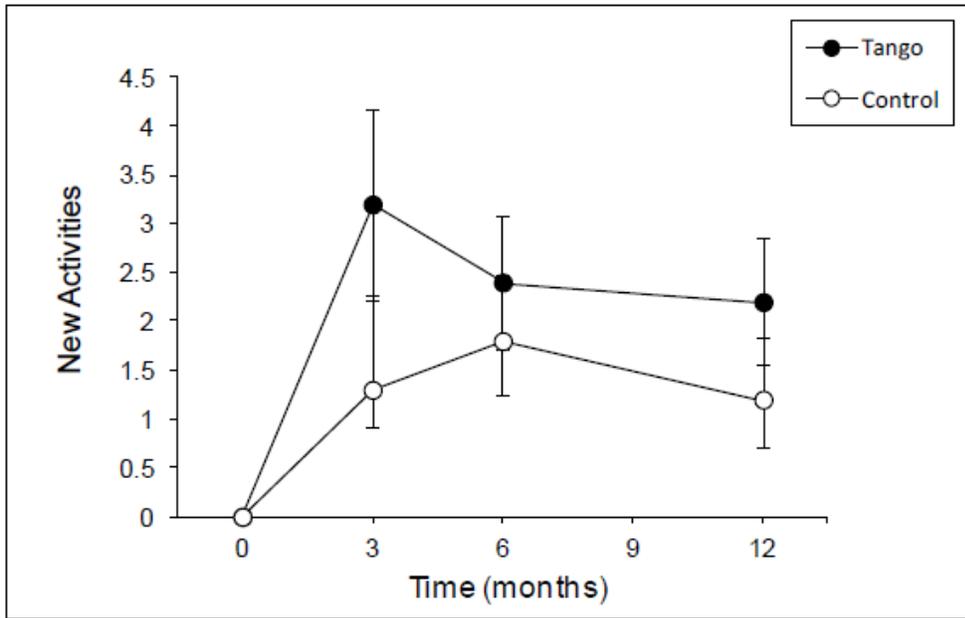
*Figure 3.* Current Participation scores on the Activity Card Sort (ACS) for each activity domain at baseline, 3-, 6-, and 12-month evaluations for the Tango and Control groups. Values are means  $\pm$  SEs. Horizontal lines indicate a significant difference within the Tango group between the time points spanned by the line.



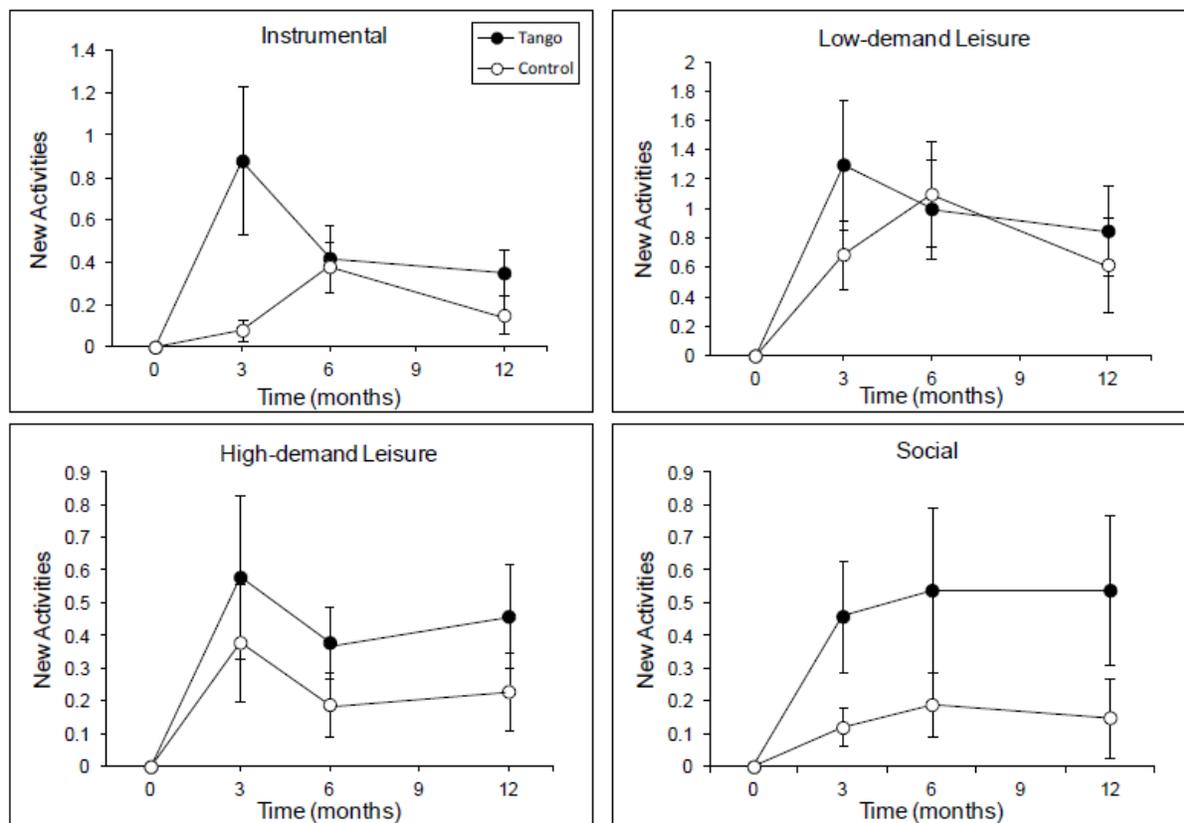
*Figure 4.* Total Activity Retention scores on the Activity Card Sort (ACS) at baseline, 3-, 6-, and 12-month evaluations for the Tango and Control groups. Activity Retention scores represent the proportion of pre-PD activities currently engaged in, calculated as Current Participation / Previous Participation. Values are means  $\pm$  SEs. Horizontal lines indicate a significant difference within the Tango group between the time points spanned by the line.



*Figure 5.* Activity Retention scores on the Activity Card Sort (ACS) for each activity domain at baseline, 3-, 6-, and 12-month evaluations for the Tango and Control groups. Values are means  $\pm$  SEs. Horizontal lines indicate a significant difference within the Tango group between the time points spanned by the line.



*Figure 6.* Total New Activity scores on the Activity Card Sort (ACS) at baseline, 3-, 6-, and 12-month evaluations for the Tango and Control groups. Values are means  $\pm$  SEs. Horizontal lines indicate a significant difference within the Tango group between the time points spanned by the line.



*Figure 7.* New Activity scores on the Activity Card Sort (ACS) for each activity domain at baseline, 3-, 6-, and 12-month evaluations for the Tango and Control groups. Values are means  $\pm$  SEs. Horizontal lines indicate a significant difference within the Tango group between the time points spanned by the line.