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**The participation of physically--challenged people in dance: mapping the experiences and studying the contributions of occupational therapy within the artistic creation context.**

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**Introduction:** Considering the importance of the arts as a clinical device and as a possibility of articulation of the subjects with the culture, we made an approach to the proposals located in the interface among the arts and the health by investigating how the experiences of physically-challenged people happen in their contact with the arts, particularly with dance.

**Objectives:** To update information and data on inclusion of physically-challenged people in artistic experiences, by preparing a consistent material that presents the mapping of those experiences in the city of São Paulo (Brazil), giving voice to the participating subjects and to the people who prepared the proposals. To reflect upon the contribution of occupational therapy within this context of artistic creation and to obtain access of physically-challenged people to the arts and culture.

**Description/Report:** It is an action of exploratory research involving the following methodological procedures: mapping locations; bibliographical research, following up the groups studied; observing participants; collecting oral reports; data qualitative analysis.

**Results:** Difficulties in accessing dance due to a small number of courses: workshops where physically-challenged people can participate; lack of preparation of local people and professionals to deal with people; need of adapting methods and techniques; proposals exclusively oriented to this population, despite allowing the experience, can stress the marks of social exclusion and limit participation; the dance experience in the life of these people allows new body awareness and stands for an important resource of expression.

**Conclusion:** We verified that although there are limited projects, we could follow individual experiences able to renew the possibilities of participation and to broaden the possibilities of physically--challenged people to come closer to the arts. We believe in the importance of forming heterogeneous groups and in the importance of building up interdisciplinary proposals.

**Contribution to the practice:** We observed that by working with dance new possibilities of existence and new ways of living are disclosed, care and attention are developed, contributing to the reorganization of people's life. The participation of occupational therapists in these processes helps transforming routines, favoring the subjects' participation and allowing personal growth, autonomy and cultural interaction.