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Huom! Tämä on rinnakkaistalenne.

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Minun ääneni – A project that brings Alzheimer’s people together to enjoy music

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As nursing students from TAMK, we got the opportunity to participate in the Minun ääneni project (translated as the “My Voice” project). This project is for people with memory disorders, and the particular event we joined was a music event in Pakkahuone on September 21st for the World’s Alzheimer’s Day. Attending was part of our Nursing Care for the Elderly studies.

Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, already suggested that music may be an aid in nursing care. Thereafter, several studies have been made, proving the benefits of music used in nursing care. It is recommended to use music in all types of nursing care, from hospitals to nursing care homes, and it is really up to the nurse and patient how music can be utilized.

Hearing familiar music connects us to previous times in our life. Once the same music is played at a later point in time, these memories can come back. Especially older people like to remember their good old times. Music in elderly care is a good way to slow down memory disorders.

In the concert on World Alzheimer's Day, organized by the Minun ääneni project, there were people dancing and singing all together. It was nice to notice how many people participated. We think it's great that these kinds of happenings are organized, especially for the elderly and people with memory illnesses, it's so important. We didn't know how to feel about the concert beforehand, but after it, we felt pleased, and it was a great experience. We got to meet many wonderful elderly people, and the professionals who organized the whole thing. The atmosphere of the event was fun, and suitable for people of all ages and it made us very happy to see how the music pulled the elderly to dance, with their partners or even on their own.

We were interviewing an elderly couple. They told us they had heard of the event in a memory cafe in Pirkkala, where they were from. The couple was enjoying the music played in the concert.

Another elderly woman came up to us and was happy to tell us about her experiences. She used to be a nurse herself and worked mostly with children in the Pediatrics ward. There she included music in the care, as children love to sing and dance. She has felt a strong connection to music her entire life and this wasn't her first time at this type of event. Whenever she comes to these events, she feels younger, more alive and happier. She meets friends during these events and loves it even more.

In connection to this course, we have learned with other groups together about the importance of music. Some have been to elderly homes to bring music to the elderly, some have interviewed them and learned hands-on about memory disorders and Parkinson's disease. All in all, the "Minun ääneni" project has been a success. Not only did we get a chance to participate in this project, but to learn about memory disorder and how music can slow it down. The event has triggered us to include music, as simple as it can be, into our work: singing and/or dancing together, enjoying singer's/player's performances or trying out instruments themselves.

As nurses, we can make a change that can start with listening to a patient's favorite song together. Personally, we enjoyed the way of learning. Instead of theoretical learning only, we got to actively participate. The event has inspired us to see music in a different, so to say, healing way. Music has the power!

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Picture: Minun ääneni project.