

## Intergenerational Interactions

**Appraised by:** Students; Sadie Bolton, SN Sarah Bolton, SN Hailie Doll, SN and Mara Pedersen, SN  
(NDSU School of Nursing at Sanford Health)

### Clinical Question:

In the geriatric population, what is the effect of intergenerational interactions on the population's geriatric health?

### Articles:

Low, L., Russell, F., McDonald, T., & Kauffman, A. (2015). Grandfriends, an intergenerational program for nursing-home residents and preschoolers: a randomized trial. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 13(3), 227-240. doi:10.1080/15350770.2015.1067130

Morita, K., & Kobayashi, M. (2013). Interactive programs with preschool children bring smiles and conversation to older adults: time-sampling study. *BioMed Central Geriatrics*, 13(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2318-13-111

Murayama, Y., Ohba, H., Yasunaga, M., Nonaka, K., Takeuchi, R., Nishi, M., & ... Fujiwara, Y. (2015). The effect of intergenerational programs on the mental health of elderly adults. *Aging & Mental Health*, 19(4), 306-314. doi:10.1080/13607863.2014.933309

Tabuchi & Miura (2015) Young people's reactions change elderly people's generativity and narratives: the effects of intergenerational interaction on the elderly, *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 13(2), 118-133, DOI: 10.1080/15350770.2015.1026298

### Synthesis of Evidence:

Four articles were reviewed as evidence in this report. A systematic review of three random control trials, and one cross-sectional study.

A random control trial was conducted by Low, Russel, McDonald, & Kauffman (2015) that investigated the impact of intergenerational activities (Grandfriends Program) on older adults within a long-term care facility. Residents were first asked to complete surveys and assessments that would explain their baseline. Two groups of 20 residents were randomly selected. The control group attended regularly scheduled activities in the nursing home. The experimental group participated in Grandfriends which was a program in which preschool students visited and interacted with residents for 45 minutes once a week for 12 weeks. Low et al (2015) found that the implementation of the Grandfriends Program increased active, passive, and self-engagement during activities but showed no differences in quality of life, agitation, or sense of community.

A cross-sectional study using time sampling was conducted by Kumiko Morita and Minako Kobayashi (2013) that studied the effects of intergenerational programs on

older adults. The study aimed to compare social-oriented intergenerational interactions and performance-based intergenerational interactions to determine desirable interaction for older adults. The participants of this study included 25 older adults aged 71 to 101 and children ages 5 to 6. The older adults were split into three separate groups. Two of the groups participated in social-oriented intergenerational interactions and one group participated in performance-based intergenerational interactions. The social-oriented groups included the older adults and children playing games together. The performance-based group included the older adults and children singing songs and dancing. The results of the study revealed smiles occurred within both groups from the older adults just looking at the children. The social-oriented intergenerational program created higher levels of smiles, constructive behavior, and conversations when compared to the performance-based intergenerational group. Laughter occurred within the social-oriented groups, but visual attention occurred more frequently in the performance-based intergenerational group. Overall, the social-oriented and the performance-based intergenerational programs both created conversation and brought smiles to the older adults involved.

Murayama et al. (2015) conducted a randomized control trial to clarify the effect of intergenerational interaction on the elderly populations depressive mood. The study included 80 participants, 26 in the intervention group and 54 in the control group. All participants were 65 or older with the ability to read and without the diagnosis of dementia or depression. The intervention group read to and interacted with children from elementary schools, kindergartens, and day cares. After two years of the intervention, the final results concluded a decrease in depression and increase in quality of life among the intervention group. Sense of coherence, comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness all increased more over time among the intervention group. Overall, the intergenerational interactions were beneficial to geriatric mental health.

Tabuchi (2015) conducted a randomized control trial aimed to investigate the effect of the listener's reactions, both elderly and young population, on the psychological development and narratives of elderly people when they perform the altruistic behavior of imparting wisdom gained from their own experiences to the younger generation. This study recruited 34 Japanese males between the ages of 60 and 82 years of age from a senior center in Japan. Two male university students aged 22 satisfied the younger generation listener group. Participants were then divided into four groups. One group consisted of 17 elderly participants who portrayed empathetic reactions while the second group of 17 elderly participants responded neutrally. The third group consisted of one university student who responded empathetically while the second university student, group four, demonstrated a neutral reaction. The elderly participants answered a questionnaire including basic attributes such as age, number of years of education, subjective sense of economic circumstances, and health and altruistic behaviors in everyday life. This shortened Generativity Scale was also completed after delivering their narratives. This study found that there was a significant difference in the ratio of the listener's reaction and when the listener was a young person opposed to an elderly listener. Empathetic reactions coming from the younger generation resulted in the elderly narrators to describe their own "failures" to prevent the youths from making similar mistakes. High generativities scores were evident when the young listener's

reaction was empathic vs neutral. Therefore, generativity of the elderly significantly increases when the young listener's reaction is acceptance, respectful, and admirable. The importance of these interactions between different generations for elderly people to accept their own life and death are proven in this study.

**Conclusion:**

Overall, the general impression of all studies had positive impacts or no impact. There were no negative effects on the geriatric population related to the intergenerational programs. There were positive impacts on active engagement, passive engagement, self-coherence, meaningfulness, positive views of geriatric populations, and smiling.

**Implications for Nursing Practice:**

This evidence suggests that it would be beneficial for the geriatric population's mental health to incorporate intergenerational activities in long term care. Doing this could decrease geriatric depression and increase both engagement and generativity. These interactions would be beneficial both in the facility and outside of the facility.