

16<sup>th</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on

# OBESITY & WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

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## 17<sup>TH</sup> WORLD FITNESS EXPO

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### Physical activity and well-being: An exploration of the mental and physical benefits achievable through dance

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This paper explores the dance process as a means through which mental and fitness can be improved. Initially, the paper defines the interconnections between the body and the mind during the dance process. It challenges Descartes notion of Cartesian dualism; there the body and the mind are viewed as separate entities. Instead, the paper identifies where the dancer's mind and body become fused as they dances. Ultimately, at this point the dancer becomes the dance and it is during this transcendental state, that the dancer's mental and physical fitness are challenged in congruence. The paper moves on to addresses the physical benefits of dance. The approach will be twofold. Firstly, the paper will identify where regular dance sessions can develop components of fitness - cardio-respiratory fitness, muscular fitness and flexibility. In addition, sample dance types, which are particularly useful in the improvement of specific components of fitness, are identified. Finally, the paper outlines the mental benefits of dance. It focuses on dance as a form of self-expression and emotional release. It explores dance as a means through which a person's self-confidence and self-esteem can be improved. It explores the social benefits of dance and it examines where dance can be used as a tool through which a person's cultural identity can be identified and affirmed.

#### Biography

Sharon Phelan lectures in Physical Education and Dance at the Institute of Technology, in Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland. She has danced with Siamsa Tire, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, for over 25 years and she is a National Facilitator in Dance with the Department of Education. She was responsible for the first dance syllabus at second level in Ireland and she has also published internationally on dance, from educational, artistic and cultural perspectives. In 2014, her book, '*Dance in Ireland: Steps, Stages and Stories*' was published by Cambridge Scholars Press. Her current areas of interest include supervision of dance research at masters and at doctoral levels and the use of distance learning in dance in third level. She is also completing another book, which focuses on dance-in-education from an all-inclusive perspective.

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