

Tales+Dementia+Study

Research with people suffering from dementia

Background

The Tales+Dementia+Study is a scientific support of the project "Once upon a time - FAIRY TALES AND DEMENTIA", which offers structured fairy tale narrations for people suffering from moderate to severe dementia. The project cooperates with five nursing homes where 10 groups of up to 12 participants are given one intervention per week over a period of five months.

Purpose of the study

The study looks into the impact of the narrations on the participants' well-being. It also aims to identify positive and supportive interactions for the day-to-day interaction between people suffering from dementia and their health care professionals. At the same time, the study wants to define quality characteristics for narrators, to enhance further training programmes for them.

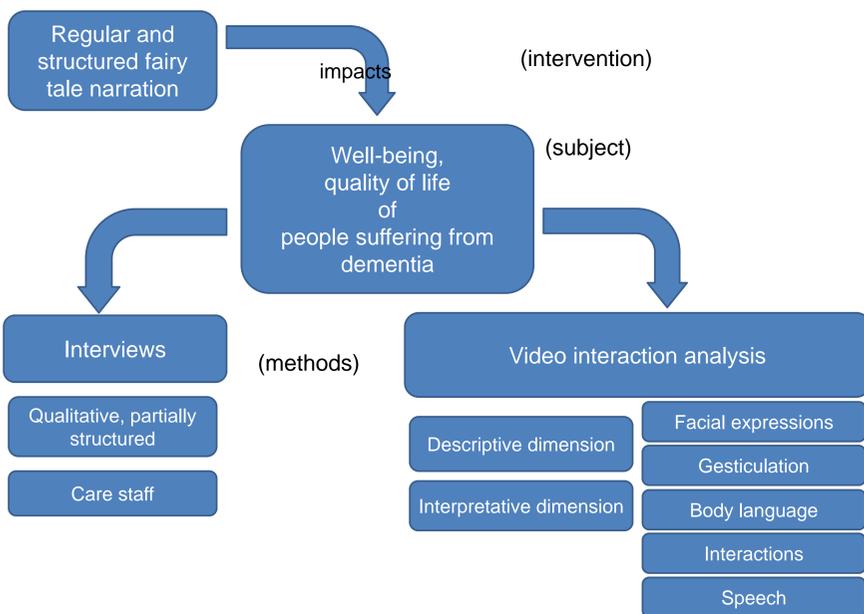
Data collection and analysis

Our study must face the fact that all of our participants have appointed legal guardians, who have given their written consent for participation. Indeed, the participants of the project all suffer from cognitive and emotional impairments as well as from health problems and diseases associated with aging, like diabetes, cardiovascular problems or hearing loss. How can people suffering from dementia co-operate in the process of our study?

Videography

Audiovisual recordings represent the main part of our field data. We use the videographic data to analyse emotions revealed by facial expressions, body language gesticulation, speech, and interactions. Although videography is criticised for showing a person's outside only without considering the subject's interpretations, in this case it is the method chosen. As people suffering from dementia can contribute information on their inner life often in a very limited way only, the analysis of non-verbal communication of emotions remains the means to include their own point of view reliably.

We analyse the videos using sequential video interaction analysis (VIA), differentiating between a descriptive and interpretative dimension. As to the descriptive dimension physical expressions and verbal behaviour are reported. The interpretative dimension deals with the participants' emotions, responsiveness, well-being and their relationships within the group and with the fairy tale narrator.

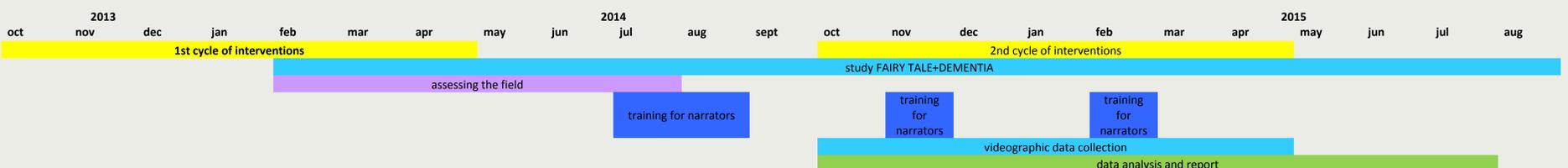


Screenshot from December 2014's data collection

Realization of the fairy tale narrations

The narrations follow closely the original Grimm account of fairy tales. To set the story telling apart and foster responses it is staged like a small-scale theatre play. A visual cue for this is the golden cloak worn by the story teller. The cloak increases recognition value and sets the event apart from everyday life. Many participants think of it as a theatre play also and dress up accordingly.

Project timeline



First preliminary results of the VIA

Participants hardly showed challenging behaviour during the interventions. As challenging behaviour is an indicator for fear and anxiety, the lack of it suggests a relatively high level of well-being. We observed that some participants activated resources in speech and uttered verbal expressions. Those who were afraid or agitated calmed down, they were able to stop wandering around to sit and listen. Considering the participants' moderate to severe dementia, they showed above average concentration and endurance.

Our Partners



Literature

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