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SILVER MEMORIES: IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

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Hobart

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Silver Memories 

- A 24-hour radio program that plays old time music from the 1920s – 1950s;
- Aims to address the needs of socially and emotionally isolated older Australians;
- Developed by Brisbane community radio station 4MBS Classic FM;
- First aired in April 2008;
- Transmitted via custom-built radio receiver;
- We received a grant to evaluate the impact of *Silver Memories* upon older peoples' quality of life




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Social Isolation and Loneliness

An important issue for older Australians – 10% over 65s are socially isolated, an additional 12% are at risk


Social isolation & loneliness  depression; poorer QOL, & loneliness poor health

Risk factors for social isolation:

- Living alone – 44% older Australians live alone
- Living in RAC – in 2007, 175,000 Australians lived in RAC
- Geographical isolation / Poor access to transport
- Physical disability / illness

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Evaluation Aim 

Some interventions to address social isolation have been trialled but few evaluated;

Interventions need to be flexible, accessible & inexpensive;


Radio is flexible, inexpensive and readily accessible;

Listening to music can improve QOL & reduce feelings of isolation & loneliness;


Can *Silver Memories* positively influence the QOL and mood of older Australians?

Can it reduce loneliness?

What do listeners think of the quality of *Silver Memories*?

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Evaluation Methodology 


A 3 month trial of *Silver Memories* involving older Australians living in the community and RAC;

Flyers advertising *Silver Memories* widely distributed in community organisations / newsletters / RACs;

Participants were provided with a radio for the trial;

Baseline and follow-up measures of QOL and well-being;

Recruitment period: August 2008 – May 2009;

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Inclusion criteria


Inclusion criteria:

- Aged 60 years+
- Willing to listen to *Silver Memories* for at least an hour a day for 3 months and record daily listening;
- Capable of providing information;

Exclusion criteria:

- Profound deafness
- Unable to speak or comprehend English
- MMSE < 14



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Measures



Baseline Measures:

- Demographic data
 - MMSE
 - Geriatric Depression Scale – 5; GDS-5
 - Quality of Life – AD (QOL-AD)
 - Single item measure of loneliness & social isolation

 - Daily listening diary
- Regular contact with RA to remind participants to complete their diaries/identify any problems/ assist people



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Measures



Follow-up Measures:

- Repeat GDS-5
- Repeat QOL-AD
- Loneliness question
- Changes in health and social circumstances
- How enjoyable did you find *Silver Memories*?
- How would you rate the quality of *Silver Memories*?
- Would you recommend *Silver Memories* to others?



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Participants

154 commenced study - 114 (74.0%) completed; 1 was excluded
5 (3.3%) died
35 (22.7%) withdrew

Reasons for withdrawing:

- health problems 10 (28.6%)
- too busy 9 (25.7%)
- reception difficulties 8 (22.9%)
- did not like the program 3 (8.6%)



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Participants

Completers were younger than withdrawals ($p < 0.000$);
had higher MMSE scores ($p = 0.003$);
more likely to live in the community ($p = 0.008$);
less likely to have dementia ($p = 0.01$);
more likely to be independently ambulatory ($p = .03$)

Completers:

- average age 79.9 years (SD = 8.9);
- 80 (70.8%) females; 33 (29.2%) males;
- 67 (59.3%) community dwelling (n = 26; 38.8% lived alone);
- 46 (40.4%) RAC (31 low-care; 15 high-care);



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Participants

- 32 (28.3%) visually impaired;
- 40 (35.1%) independently ambulatory; 59 (52.2%) ambulatory with assistance; 14 (12.3%) non-ambulatory
- an average of 2.6 chronic health conditions;
- average MMSE = 28.2 (SD = 2.3; range 19 – 30); 6 with dementia
- low GDS-5 scores (average = 0.98)
- 47.9% reported feeling lonely at least sometimes;
- 8.8% were socially isolated; 91.2% not socially isolated;
- RAC participants (n = 8; 17.4%) were more socially isolated than community dwellers (n = 2; 3.0%)



Results



Program fidelity:

108 (95.5%) returned a completed diary;
Participants listened to *Silver Memories* an average of 75.5% (SD = 20.6%), median = 75.8% days over the three months;

Change in health:

21 (18.6%) - substantial decline; 87 (77.0%) - no change;
5 (4.4%) - substantial improvement;

Change in social circumstance:

15 (13.3%) - significant adverse change;
98 (86.7%) - no change;
0 - significant positive change;



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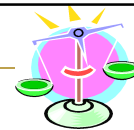
Data Analysis

Loneliness was dichotomised – lonely vs not lonely
 A composite variable was created – changes in health and changes in social circumstance were combined to become *Change in health OR social circumstance*
 Paired t-tests & Wilcoxon test to compare baseline & follow-up depression & QOL scores for whole sample;
 t-tests to compare difference scores according to lonely vs non-lonely; community vs RAC;
 ANOVA - Change in health or social circumstance



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Results



The results showed a *statistically significant* improvement in *quality of life* from baseline to follow-up ($p < 0.000$) and improvement in *depression scores* ($p = 0.003$)
 No change on loneliness measure ($p = 0.2$).

No difference in depression or QOL difference scores according to lonely vs not lonely; community vs RAC; socially isolated vs not socially isolated; or according to changes in health status and social circumstances,



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Results



How enjoyable did you find *Silver Memories*?
 Very n = 54 (49.5%) Greatly n = 29 (26.6%)
 How would you rate the overall quality of *Silver Memories*?
 Above average n = 43 (39.4) Excellent n = 31 (28.4)

Did you experience any difficulties with the reception?
 Yes n = 76 (71.0%)

Would you recommend *Silver Memories* to others?
 Yes n = 105 (96.3%)

Will you continue to listen to *Silver Memories*?
 Yes n = 100 (92.6%)



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Comments



'I have enjoyed every minute of it'
 'I looked forward to it each day'
 'Before *Silver Memories* I was depressed, lonely and bored to tears - Everyone has commented on how it has made such a difference in my life, I have improved with it'.
 "It is good that it is going at all times as you wake up at all hours".
 'I think it is lovely'
 'I love the music'



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Study Strengths and Limitations

Strengths:

Development of the evaluation methodology coincided with *Silver Memories* going to air;
 A high level of program fidelity was evident;
 Early recognition (and subsequent rectification) of reception problems;

Limitations:

Lack of a control group;
 Regular contact with the project's RA may have influenced the results;
 Self-selection of subjects may mean the results are not generalisable to the wider community;
 Very low level of social isolation;



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Conclusion and Future Directions



Silver Memories is a potentially powerful intervention that appears to improve the mood and quality of life of some older people.

Advantages include its low cost and flexibility.
 A larger scale RCT to evaluate the impact of *Silver Memories* upon very socially isolated / lonely people or people with dementia.



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Any Questions?



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