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## Music and motherhood: health care innovation through the arts

WHO Regional Office for Europe  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
6 October 2023, 9:00-16:00 CEST

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### Scope and purpose

#### Summary

On 6 October 2023, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in collaboration with the Jameel Arts and Health Lab and with the support of Central Denmark Region, will be hosting a full-day meeting to examine the potential for culture and the arts to support health systems and improve health and well-being. The meeting will use a multi-country, WHO-led implementation of an arts intervention, called “Music and Motherhood”, as a case study.

#### Background

In 2019, WHO published a [scoping review](#) on the evidence base for how arts can support health. This seminal report cast a spotlight on the growing momentum within the arts and health research field. From dancing for Parkinson’s, to singing groups that improve lung health, the report showed how arts and health interventions can help with the promotion of health and well-being, the prevention of disease, and the treatment and management of a variety of illnesses. Importantly, the report also illustrated how, at a time when health systems are increasingly stretched, a multi-sectoral arts and health approach can provide opportunities for increasing health systems capacity using new as well as untapped resources in the culture sector. This integration can be achieved using [social prescribing](#), which is a means of connecting patients to a range of non-clinical services in the community to improve their health and well-being.

To better understand the practical implications of delivering arts and health interventions in different settings, WHO Europe has implemented a [study protocol](#) built around a [clinically evidenced](#) intervention for mothers who experience postpartum depression (PPD). [Originally developed](#) in the United Kingdom, the intervention, called “Music and Motherhood”, supports mothers experiencing PDD through specifically designed singing group session over a 10-week period. The study was conducted in three WHO Europe member states ([Romania](#), Italy, and Denmark) to determine the feasibility of implementing the intervention in other cultural contexts. Lessons learned from this project, and implications for developing similar arts and health initiatives and integrating these into health systems, will be collected in a report due to be launched in October 2023.

#### Stakeholder meeting

Following the conclusion of the study, WHO Europe is organising a full-day (9:00-16:00 CEST), multi-stakeholder meeting on 6 October 2023 at UN City in Copenhagen, Denmark. Participants will include cultural and health policy makers, global experts in the field, “Music and Motherhood” project partners, and arts practitioners.

The objectives of this meeting are to:

- showcase the results of the “Music and Motherhood” implementation study and the resultant arts and health implementation report;
- discuss the barriers and drivers to promote arts participation as a health behaviour; and
- illustrate how member states are using social prescribing mechanism to integrate arts activities and interventions into their health systems.

The meeting will feature a range of activities to support these different objectives. Plenary presentations, testimonies, panel discussions, and audio-visual elements will provide participants with an understanding of the evidence base as well as the practical means of implementing arts and health interventions in their countries. At the same time, artistic elements will provide an experiential understanding of arts participation as an important health behaviour.

The expected outcomes of this meeting include:

- a shared understanding of the evidence base behind arts and health;
- insight into the practical steps required to implement arts and health interventions and to integrate these into health systems; and
- an opportunity to network with a variety of arts and health stakeholders across the WHO European Region.