

A Focus on the Reminiscence Bump to Personalise Music Playlists

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Introduction

Music and memory are inextricably linked (Bower 1981, Berntsen and Rubin 2004). Despite music being enjoyed throughout life, the recollection of music varies according to age. In order to be able to create personalised music playlists tailored for people living with dementia, the aim of this study was to determine the age at which healthy individuals could best recall music that was popular at the time.

Table of Demographics:

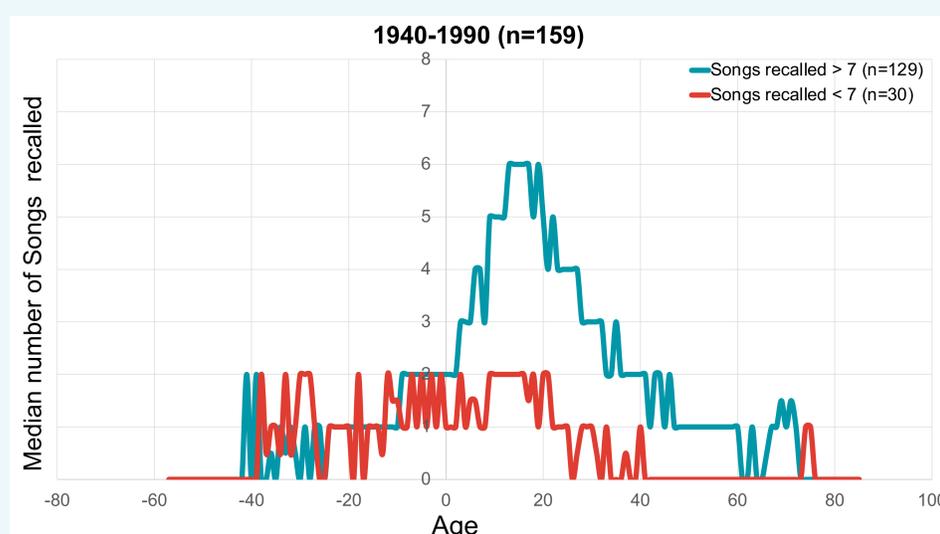
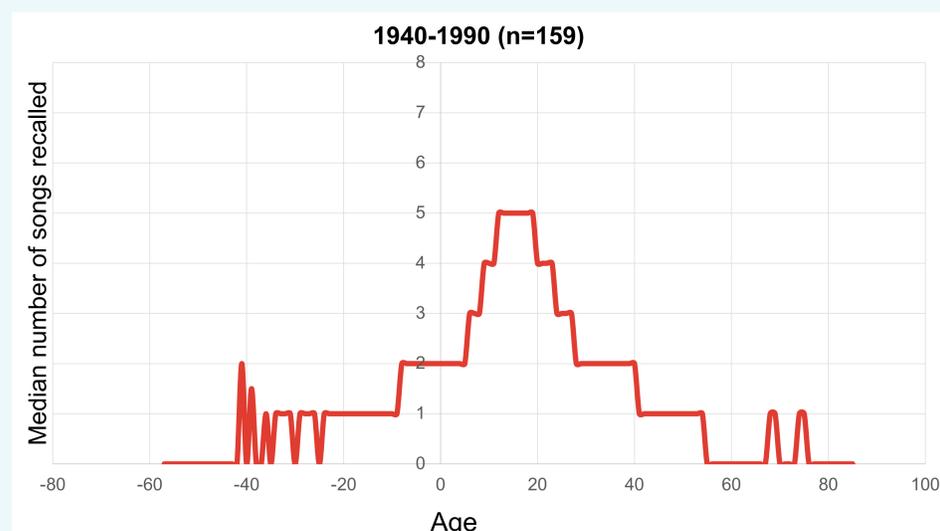
Year of Birth	Invited participants	Analysed population
Pre 1940	10	0
1940 - 1949	62	33
1950 - 1959	82	50
1960 - 1969	55	32
1970 - 1979	54	31
1980 - 1989	29	13
1990 - 1999	12	0
2000 - 2009	2	0
Unknown	5	0
TOTAL	311	159

Methods

A survey instrument was designed (SVMK Inc, United States) and distributed through a newsletter and social media channels. 311 individuals born between 1929 and 2002 were asked to identify the number of songs they recalled from a random selection of ten of the Top 100 songs for each year between 1945 and 2015.

Example Question from 1984:

- Down Under** (Men At Work)
- Making Your Mind Up** (Bucks Fizz)
- Easy Lover** (Philip Bailey With Phil Collins)
- Nothing's Gonna Change My Love For You** (Glenn Medeiros)
- Let's Dance** (David Bowie)
- Hello** (Lionel Richie)
- Into The Groove** (Madonna)
- Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)** (Paul Young)
- Red Red Wine** (UB40)
- Papa Don't Preach** (Madonna)



Results and Discussion

After excluding 152 participants who failed to follow the procedures as instructed, 159 participants remained for analysis. The median peak of recollection was between the ages of 12-19 across all age cohorts. During these years, participants recalled a median number of 5 songs.

The sample of 129 participants, who could recall more than 7 songs in any one year, clearly illustrated greatest recall of music that was popular when they were between the ages of 13-19, during which time they recognised a median of 6 songs per year.

In those who were unable to recall seven songs in any single year (n=30), there was no clear trend dependent on age. Furthermore, the median number of songs recalled per year never exceeded 2.

The period of adolescence is important, with emotional and cognitive scripts taking a forefront in life as the brain matures and important experiences take place. Music provides a background for this period of life and is retained and recalled enthusiastically during this period, suggesting that an emotional link to the music inspires this recollection.

Conclusion

The peak of recollection of popular music occurs between 12-19 years of age. Music from this 'remembrance bump' period of life provides a rich source of retained music that should be tapped when creating playlists of meaningful music for people living with dementia.