

Alzheimer Without Myths: An Interactive Community Program Addressing Misconceptions and Promoting Brain Health Behaviors.

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Background

- Misconceptions about Alzheimer's, such as inevitability with age, genetic determinism, or lack of preventive actions, hinder early detection and risk reduction efforts^{1,2}.
- In line with other initiatives³, community-based public awareness initiatives are a way to provide accessible, evidence-informed education about Alzheimer and dementia and can encourage individuals to take small practical actions to support both research and people living with the condition.
- The Pasqual Maragall Foundation is sustained by the support of more than 120,000 members distributed across Spain. Approximately 65% of them report having close personal experience with Alzheimer's disease.
- Organizing events to disseminate knowledge about the disease and to engage with this community and general public is a core component of the mission of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation.

Aims

- To describe** the implementation and reach of Alzheimer Without Myths, an interactive community-based educational program designed to debunk common misconceptions about Alzheimer's disease.
- To evaluate** participant engagement and satisfaction with the program as indicators of its feasibility and potential value as a scalable public health intervention to improve dementia literacy and encourage brain health behaviors.
- To engage** the non-profit institution's members and collaborators in ongoing research and to foster new partnerships and support for the cause.

Methods

Debunking myths, promoting understanding

- We developed a community-based educational program. The intervention consists of a **75-minute interactive session** led by a professional with extensive clinical and research expertise in dementia, as well as advanced science communication and educational skills.
- Each session presents **ten statements** (Figure 1) covering Alzheimer's pathology, diagnosis, treatment, genetics, risk factors, and prevention. Participants vote using colored response cards (**true, false, or partly true**), allowing real-time identification of misconceptions and discussion of scientific evidence (Figure 2). Sessions conclude with a **30-minute Q&A** and distribution of a standardized **brochure** summarizing key evidence-based messages (Figure 3).
- All educational materials were developed following structured guidelines to ensure **consistency, clarity, and scientific rigor**.
- Following participation, attendees are invited to complete an **online questionnaire** assessing satisfaction, perceived usefulness, speaker performance, and overall experience.



Figure 2. One of the lectures taking place. Attendees show their agreement degree with each of the 10 statements presented during the session.



Figure 3. Brochure delivered at the end of each session with the 10 statements and a summary of the evidence-based messages that explain the truth behind them.

Results

- 5 community sessions delivered across Spain in 2025. (Figure 4)
- 900 participants reached, including lay public, caregivers, and older adults. Persistent misconceptions identified regarding: Dementia as a normal part of aging; genetic determinism of Alzheimer's disease; the belief that prevention is not possible.
- High audience engagement observed through active participation and extensive Q&A discussions.
- Participant satisfaction was consistently high across all assessed dimensions, based on 334 post-session surveys. (Figure 5)
- Local media attended and reported on the lecture series, reflecting public interest in Alzheimer's awareness and helping amplify the initiative's key messages beyond the immediate audience. (Figure 6)



Figure 4. Locations where the initiative took place and attendees figures during 2025.

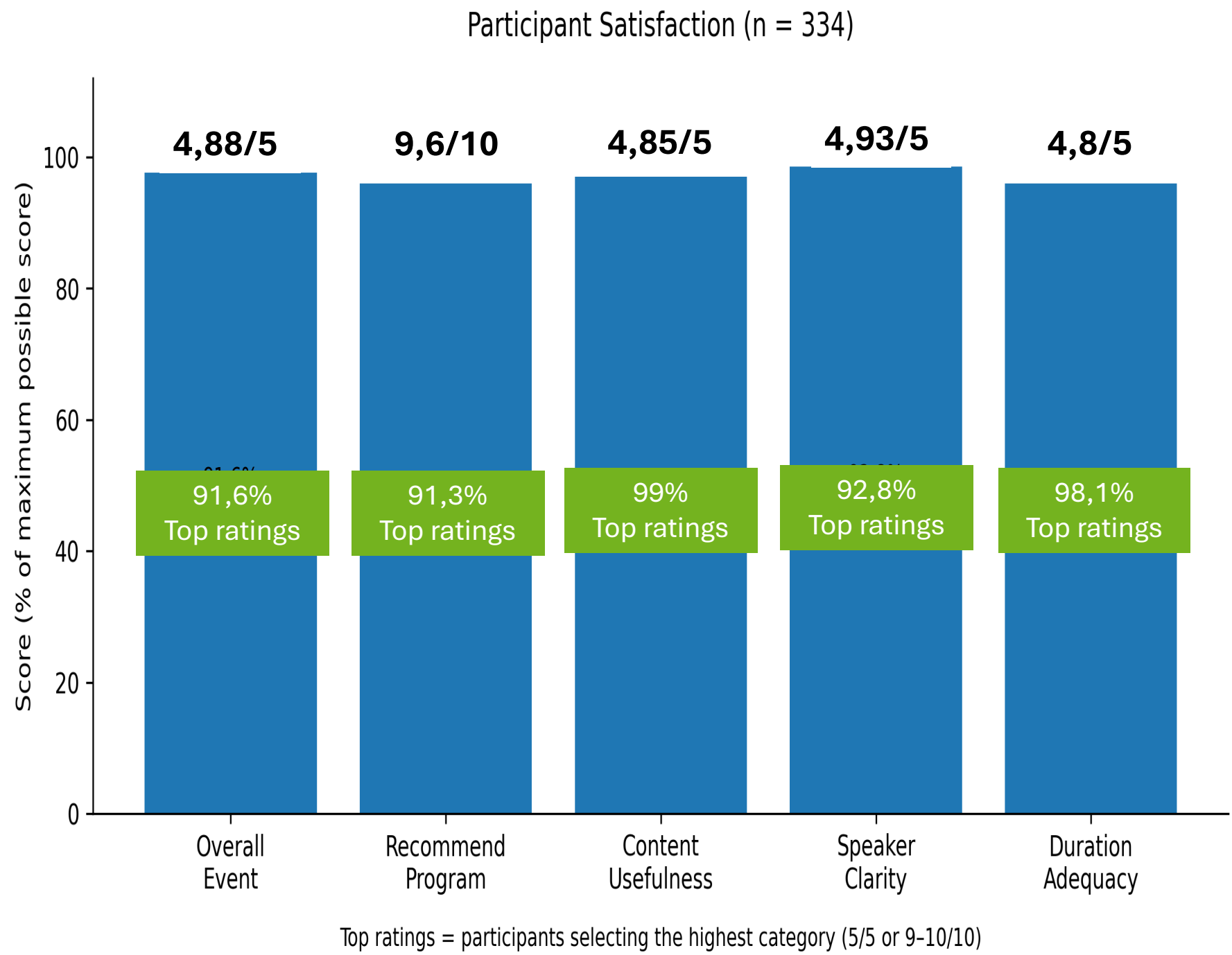


Figure 5. Results of the online questionnaires filled by the participants after the session.



Figure 6. Examples of local media coverage of the initiative.

Conclusions

- Alzheimer Without Myths** demonstrates the feasibility of delivering a scalable, community-based educational intervention to address misconceptions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia.
- Persistent misconceptions regarding dementia** as a normal consequence of aging, genetic determinism, and the possibility of prevention highlight the ongoing need for accessible public education initiatives.
- The program achieved **high levels of participant engagement and satisfaction**, supporting the acceptability of interactive, evidence-based formats for communicating dementia-related information to diverse audiences.
- Expanding initiatives that combine scientific rigor with accessible communication may contribute to **improving dementia literacy and raising awareness of modifiable risk factors**.

References

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Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the more than 120,000 members who support the Pasqual Maragall Foundation. Our thanks also go to the Fundraising and Engagement teams, and to all staff at the Pasqual Maragall Foundation and the BarcelonaBeta Brain Research Center, for their dedication and collaboration.



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