

## Increasing awareness for physical activity of older adults with diabetes

of Setúbal, Portugal.

**Background:** Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) is an increasing prevalent chronic condition amongst the older population, with high levels of morbidity and mortality. **Aim:** To increase the awareness of low literate older adults, in a rural setting, with T2DM, for the importance of physical activity and exercise (PA&E). **Method:** A health promotion program of 7 weeks was implemented. The outcomes assessed were knowledge about PA&E, adherence to daily steps register (pedometer), and changes in PA levels. **Results:** Most participants increased their knowledge on physical activity practice, namely about the minimum exercise levels recommended to obtain health benefits (68.4% participants); the difference between physical activity and exercise and the number of daily steps recommended for their age and health benefits of walking (32% participants). Attendance rate for the exercise session was 63.6%, of which 80% felt at least confident during the session; 100% felt autonomous in performing global exercise and 50% concerning local exercise. No one felt that the session was difficult and 91.6% referred no fear of falling or of movement. As for the diary, the number of registrations varied between everyday and 19 days (76%), and 45% increased their daily steps. The daily physical activity level varied greatly consisting mainly of household work, and exercise was focused on walking between 180 and 21.25 min/day. **Conclusion:** This program was implemented in a rural setting with older diabetic adults, with low educational levels (max. 4 years). Overall, the program was effective in increasing participant's knowledge concerning the importance of physical activity and exercise and physical activity level through daily steps. There was a very positive response, with a request for the continuity of the exercise sessions. Long-term follow up is recommended to assess the maintenance of the changes obtained. **Keywords:** Diabetes Mellitus; Health Promotion; Physical Activity; Exercise; Awareness.