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Raymond A. Addante

Patrick M. Benson

Liqun Chen

Jenna Ford

Jessica Louie

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Raymond A. Addante, Patrick M. Benson, Liqun Chen, Jenna Ford, Jessica Louie, Kenneth S. Mensch, Dijana Poljak, Kathryn Schlosser, Pam Farnham, and Alexandra Jasinowski

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS AND MOTIVATORS TO EXERCISE IN 50-65 YEAR-OLD ADULTS ?

Addante¹, Raymond A., Benson¹, Patrick M., Chen¹, Liqun, Ford¹, Jenna, Louie¹, Jessica, Mensch¹, Kenneth S., Poljak¹, Dijana, Schlosser¹, Kathryn, Farnham², Pam, Jasinowski³, Alexandra

¹ University of Vermont College of Medicine, Burlington, VT, ² Fletcher Allen Health Care, Burlington, VT

³ Greater Burlington YMCA, Burlington, VT



INTRODUCTION

- The health benefits of exercise in older adults have been well established, but barriers prohibit regular exercise.
- Benefits of exercise in adult populations include improved cardiovascular health, decrease in bone fractures, and increased mental capacity⁶.
- Current federal guidelines for exercise for adults state⁷:
 - > 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate intensity on 2 or more days a week OR
 - > 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous exercise on 2 or more days a week
 - > each working all muscle groups
- Among 70-year olds, the largest barriers to health were: poor health, lack of company, interest, transportation and/or opportunity for sport/leisure¹².
- Social cognitive theory suggests that the motivation to exercise in a particular individual is based on three things¹³:
 - > Self-efficacy
 - > Outcome expectations
 - > Self-evaluated satisfaction or dissatisfaction

- In particular, self-efficacy was lower in older individuals
- Positive enforcement of self-efficacy can be a means to ensure that individuals will continue to exercise¹⁰.
- Social support and the ability to interact with others increase activity in 65+ year-olds².
- Having a primary care provider or participating spouse is a positive influence to adopting a healthier and more active lifestyle¹⁴.



METHODS

- A survey instrument was created and disseminated at community sites in the Greater Burlington area to a 50-65 year-old adult demographic.
- The survey was designed and based on previous participation in the greater Burlington YMCA program. The topics explored were based on trends of YMCA participant behavior, including popular activities, expressed barriers to exercise, and participant demographics.

Demographic Information	M	% of Respondents
Sex		
	M	52
	F	48
Occupation		
	Retired	23
	Employed Full-time	16
	Employed Part-time	4
	Student	0
	Unemployed	3
	Other	4
Education		
	High School Graduate or GED	6
	Professional or trade certificate/degree	4
	Bachelor's degree	15
	Graduate degree	25
Primary Care Doctor		
	Yes	46
	No	4
Activity Level		
	Less than once per week	1
	1-2 days per week	4
	3-4 days per week	10
	5 or more times per week	35

Table 1: Demographics

RESULTS

- The greatest motivators of physical activity in the 50+ age group were: **Improving health (78%), Reducing Stress (64%), Losing Weight (56%) and Boosting Energy (56%). Figure 1.**
- The 50+ age group was the most interested in: **Outdoor activities (90%), Mindfulness activities (50%), Aquatic activities (36%), Dancing (32%) and Volunteering (32%). Figure 2.**
- Time (35%), Motivation (21%), Cost (15%) and Energy (13%)** were reported to be the largest barriers to activity in the 50+ age group. **Figure 3.**
- 92% of those surveyed in the 50+ age group had a Primary Care Physician. Table 1.**



Figure 1: Motivators for Activity

Barriers To Activity - Ages 50+

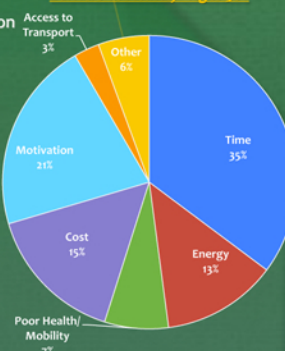


Figure 3: Barriers to Activity

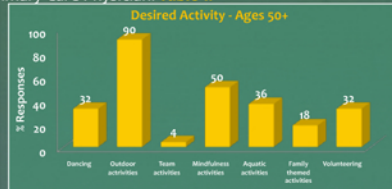


Figure 2: Desired Activity

CONCLUSIONS

- Time was reported as the greatest barrier to exercise. Offering programming at a variety of times may help overcome this barrier.
 - Motivation was also a significant barrier to exercise. Respondents listed improving health, decreasing stress and losing weight as sources of personal motivation. Emphasizing these aspects when recruiting or advertising can encourage participation.
 - Cost was reported as another significant barrier to physical activity. The YMCA already provides sliding scale rates and can continue to advertise their flexible fees.
- ## RECOMMENDATIONS
- Outdoor and mindfulness activities were the most popular categories in our data. By using the natural resources in Vermont, the YMCA can provide activities to encourage this demographic to increase their physical activity.
 - Since 92% of the population that we surveyed had a primary care physician we feel that this would be the best location to advertise and provide information for upcoming classes and activities that the YMCA will be organizing.

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