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COVID Restrictions Did Not Decrease Physical Activity in Community-Dwelling Older Adults

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COVID Restrictions Did Not Decrease Physical Activity in Community-Dwelling Older Adults

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INTRODUCTION:

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused many individuals to stay isolated at home for varying lengths of time due to local and state stay-at-home orders.
- The extent of impacts on the older adult population is not yet known
- Understanding how the stay-at-home orders affected physical activity in older adults will help physical therapists and medical practitioners prepare for restriction-related impairments and complications

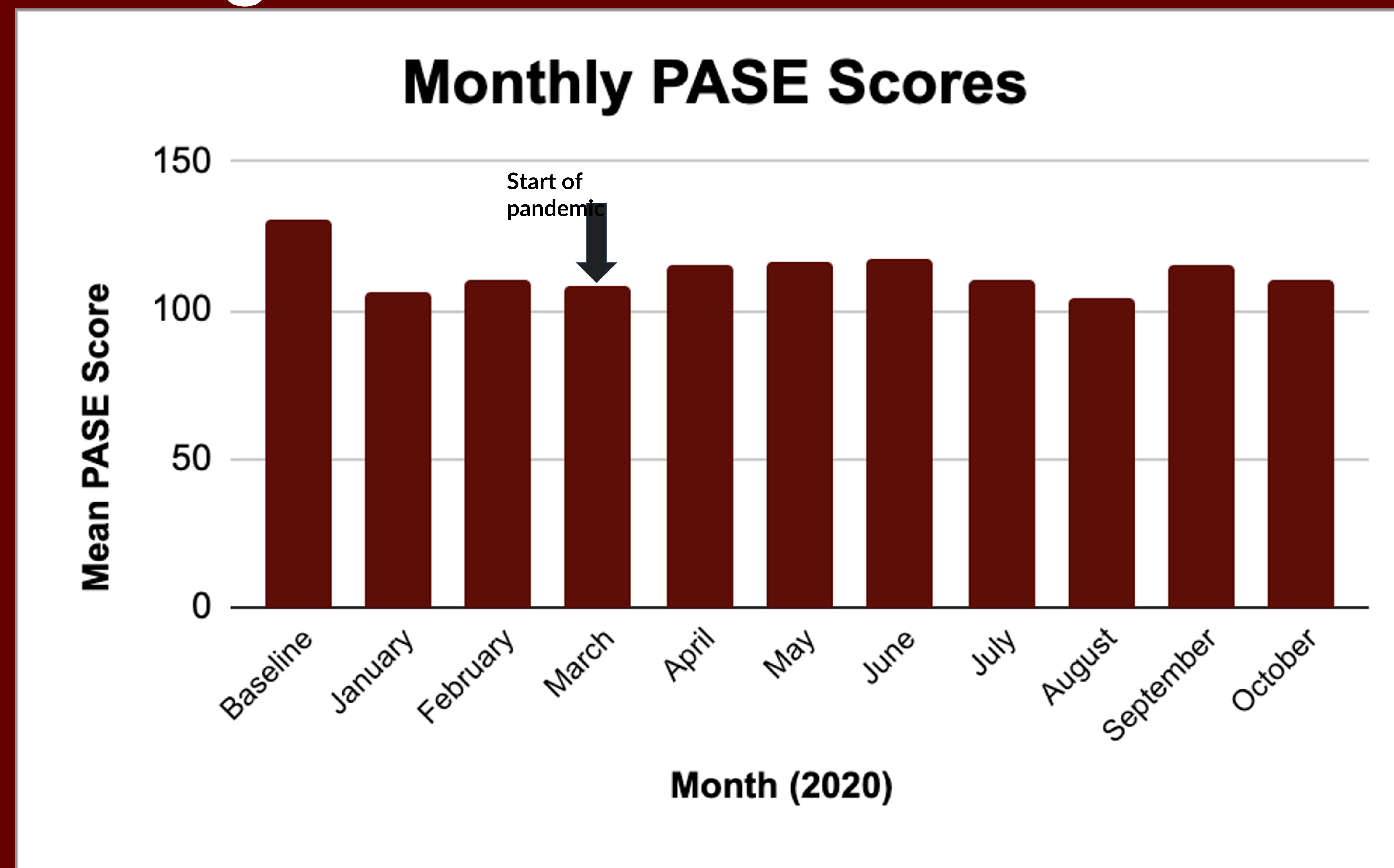
PURPOSE:

To examine the effects of the 2020 COVID-19 stay-at-home orders on the overall physical activity levels, the number of hours spent walking outside of the home, and the number of work or volunteer hours in community-dwelling older adults.

METHODS:

- Participants (n=89) completed the Physical Activity Scale for the Elderly (PASE) for 10-months
- Retrospective analysis
- One-way repeated measures ANOVA with post hoc for differences in:
 - PASE scores
 - PASE item 2 scores (walking)
 - Work and volunteer hours
- Paired t-tests for difference in outcomes three months prior to and after COVID restrictions

Physical activity (PASE) scores during the first seven months of COVID-19 restrictions did not differ from pre-COVID scores, indicating no change in physical activity levels of community-dwelling older adults.



RESULTS:

- Mean return rate was 91.0%

PASE Scores (mean±SD)				
	Baseline	Pre-COVID	Post-COVID	P-value
Total Score	130.65 ± 56.94	115.04 ± 54.00	121.31 ± 55.81	0.224
Item 2	22.23 ± 21.17	16.68 ± 15.52	17.88 ± 15.40	0.344
Work hours/wk.	3.05 ± 5.80	3.39 ± 5.81	2.51 ± 6.37	0.159

- No differences in monthly PASE scores except between baseline and January and baseline and August
 - January: 106.01 ± 53.35, p=.040
 - August: 103.68 ± 57.71, p=.027
- No significant difference among monthly:
 - PASE item 2 scores (p=.805)
 - Work/volunteer hours (p=.735)

CLINICAL RELEVANCE:

Despite COVID stay-at-home restrictions, community-dwelling older adults did not experience significant impacts to their daily physical activity. This long term, prospective assessment of activity levels demonstrates older adults were able to maintain their physical activity. Our results suggest that community-dwelling older adults may not experience greater health complications associated with inactivity as result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

