

The impact of foot problems on social participation in older people: protocol for a qualitative study

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Introduction & study aims

Social participation is defined as a person's involvement in activities that provide interaction with others in the community and is a well-recognised modifiable determinant for successful ageing [1]. Poor foot health is common in older people and negatively impacts undertaking activities of daily living. Previous work has shown that people living with foot problems related to connective tissue disorders [2] and diabetes [3] experience reduced social participation, however the precise reasons for this are unclear. This study will address the following research questions:

1. What do older community-dwelling adults perceive as foot health-related barriers and facilitators to social participation?
2. What are their experiences of social participation when experiencing problems with foot health?
3. What support would older people living with foot problems perceive as useful in facilitating social participation?



Discussion

- All approvals are in place and recruitment has started.
- The results of this study will identify any foot-related barriers and facilitators for social participation and will explore how these barriers may be overcome.
- This study will contribute important knowledge by exploring older peoples' experiences of, and perceptions towards, foot problems and social participation.



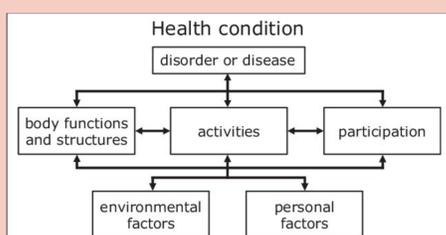
Methods

Methodology: The study will use qualitative methods via semi-structured one-to-one interviews and focus groups. The North of Scotland Research Ethics Committee approved the study (REC reference: 23/NS/0033).

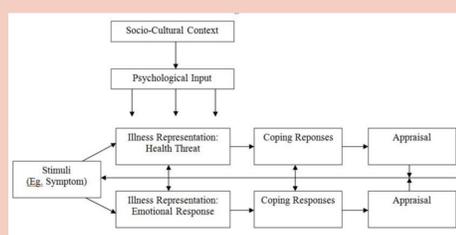
Sampling: Participants (n=30) will be recruited from podiatry clinics, GP practices, and community groups across Tayside.

Inclusion criteria: (i) Over 65 years of age; (ii) living in the community; (iii) able to provide informed consent; (iv) able to provide a positive answer ("some problems" or "severe problems") to at least one item on the Podiatry Health Questionnaire (PHQ), a robust questionnaire that measures foot-related health [4].

Data collection and analysis: Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. The Framework approach will facilitate data analysis [5]. The World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO-ICF) and the Common-Sense Model of Illness (CSM) will inform the analysis.



WHO-ICF domains



Common-sense model of illness

Clinical significance

This study will inform strategies for improving foot health and social participation by developing understandings of the challenges related to poor foot health and participating in social activities.

References

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