

## Presidents Round

### Scientific Presentation - HSR (Health Service Research)

#### 676 OPTIMISING ENGAGEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS IN AN ONLINE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE COGNITION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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**Introduction:** Maintaining physical activity is a modifiable risk factor for cognitive impairment. However, despite numerous public health interventions, older adults do not routinely

meet activity guidelines. Online interventions offer an alternative means of engaging with this group. The role of an online intervention holds particular value in the context of a global pandemic where people have become accustomed to digital living. Furthermore, such an intervention negates barriers frequently faced by older adults in attending face to face interventions, whilst providing an economically viable option. This study explored the factors which maximise engagement in an online programme to promote physical activity.

**Methods:** A qualitative study was conducted with adults aged 50 and over. Individual were recruited through the online UK PROTECT study cohort. Four focus groups (n = 21) examined key contributors to engagement with a digital programme to promote physical activity. Iterative Categorization was utilised to identify categories and themes of the focus group data. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted (n = 5) whereby participants were asked to comment on a concept-stage online intervention.

**Results:** Four major themes emerged from the focus group data: interaction at the fore, incentives as foundations, fitting around me and identity is critical. The semi-structured interviews identified further key areas of programme acceptability and specific needs for enhancing engagement.

**Conclusions:** Older adults are open to using digital physical activity programmes, with the recent COVID-19 pandemic driving an appetite for online delivery. Any intervention must be tailored to individual usability preferences and take account of the fitness, health and lifestyle needs specific to older adults. Furthermore, the conceptual-stage intervention used in this study was found to be acceptable, with key changes needed to maximise engagement.