

Southern California. The researcher used purposive sampling to diversify the sample by selecting male and female participants (N=18) from multiple geographical areas. Guided by a primary research question: Why do Masters swimmers choose swim late in life, when most of their age cohort are becoming less physically active, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to delve into the lived experiences of the participants, solicited peer feedback and employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Four main themes emerged: Masters swimming provided an enjoyable way to slow physical decline; participants felt camaraderie; working out with a group provided challenge and achievement that reinforced their identity as swimmers; and their practice greatly reduced stress. A formidable barrier was revealed when most of the participants expressed longing and regret that they could not swim due to COVID risk and safety guidelines. These findings can be used to design community programs to promote lifelong physical activity participation.

PILOTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A TEXT MESSAGING AND FITNESS TRACKING INTERVENTION WITHIN OLDER BLACK WOMEN

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Physical activity (PA) can help lower risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes, reduce anxiety, and reduce risk of Alzheimer's and other related dementias. Despite these benefits, older, obese Black women are not meeting CDC recommended PA guidelines at disproportionate rates. This study aims to identify whether a targeted intervention, Texting Older Sisters to Step (T.O.S.S.), can improve health-related outcomes within older Black women. A sample of 24 Black women (12 per group) age 60 and older who had a BMI > 30 were recruited. The treatment group received text messages previously validated to promote physical activity every day for 12-weeks and were placed in Fitbit communities. The control group received a general health or nutrition-related text message every Sunday. Participants ranged from 60 to 70 years of age with a mean of 64 and 90% had at least some college education. Overall, there was a significant reduction of 1.53 inches in waist circumference, $p < .01$. When the groups were compared, the treatment group showed a 2.16 inch reduction compared to a 0.91 inch reduction in the control group (Cohen's $d=0.54$, a medium effect size). Similarly, the treatment group lost 2.50 pounds on average compared to 1.33 in the control group ($d=0.23$). When the groups were compared on HgA1c, the treatment group was stable with a reduction of 0.01 unit whereas the control group reduction was 0.15 unit ($d=0.23$). Findings provide initial support for the T.O.S.S. intervention and suggest a modification of including nutrition information among the intervention messages.

SILVER SNEAKERS IN CENTRAL PA: ASSESSMENT OF A COMMUNITY BASED EXERCISE PROGRAM IN A MIXED RURAL/URBAN CATCHMENT AREA

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Older cancer survivors present with unique challenges that may impact quality of life and increase physical dysfunction if not properly managed. Regular physical activity (PA) can help mitigate these effects. Silver Sneakers (SS), a free exercise program available to Medicare beneficiaries, has more than 16,000 US locations. To understand capacity of SS to serve older adults in our mixed rural/urban catchment area of Central Pennsylvania, we 1) identified all registered SS program locations in our 28-county catchment area and; 2) conducted phone questionnaires with SS program staff. Approximately 18 gyms closed during the pandemic, leaving a sample of 121 participating gyms. We talked to 80 gyms (66% response rate) to understand member and programming characteristics, training of staff and program marketing. Geographic locations of SS were mixed – 39% in rural and 61% in urban counties; the majority (43%) were located in private gyms or YMCAs. The majority of gyms reported membership was equally mixed by gender and described ages of members as 65-80 years (94%). Program staff said that many members exercised several times per week with friends/family. Program staff also reported that social opportunities (35%) were a primary reason participants remained active in SS. Most (89%) of the facilities were still able to offer SS during the pandemic, with the majority (60%) adapting format to Zoom and other video platforms to conduct classes. Overall, SS programs offer a sustainable option to facilitate access to exercise programs and reduce barriers to PA among older adults in our catchment area.

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEISURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVEL WITH DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AFTER 5-YEARS OF FOLLOW-UP

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BACKGROUND: Depressive symptoms in older adults are associated with socioeconomic status (SES), medical care, and physical activity. However, there is little evidence on the longitudinal association between level of leisure activity (LA) and physical activity (PA) with depressive symptoms among community-dwelling older adults in Iceland. The study examined an association of LA and PA at baseline with high depressive symptoms (HGDS) assessed after 5 years of follow-up among community-dwelling older adults. METHODS: A large community-based population residing in Reykjavik, Iceland participated in a longitudinal study with