

Title of Intervention: Group Education in Retirement Villages

Intervention Strategies: Group Education

Purpose of the Intervention: To improve physical functioning and reduce the rate of falling in frail older people

Population: Older adults ages 62 and older who live in self- and intermediate- retirement villages

Setting: Retirement villages in Sydney and Wollongong, Australia; community-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- **Group Education:** The intervention was designed to address risk factors for falls and to improve the participants' ability to undertake activities for daily living. The exercise groups were conducted twice weekly for a 12 month period in a common room within each village site. Six instructors trained to provide the same program led the classes. Each class was conducted for 1 hour and consisted of three sections: 5-15 min warm-up, 35-40 min conditioning period and 10 minute cool-down period. Although following a core theme, the exercise classes were individualized to the functional capabilities of the participants. The conditioning period consisted of aerobic exercises, specific strengthening exercises and activities for balance hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, and flexibility. The control group took part in a flexibility and relaxation program to assess the effects of a group activity involving a minimal-intensity exercise program, instructed by yoga instructors. These classes also met twice weekly.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Instructors
- **Training:** Instructors received training
- **Technology:** Not mentioned
- **Space:** Open meeting room
- **Budget:** Not mentioned
- **Intervention:** Exercise programs
- **Evaluation:** Falls record book

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Cluster randomized, controlled trial
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - Questionnaires were given to participants every month to provide information on the number of falls in the past month and the nature of the falls. Additionally, a falls record book was established by the staff at the start of the study at intermediate-care sites. Staff recorded the falls they witnessed and cases where participants came to the nursing station for treatment of an injury because of a fall.

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** For physical performance, the exercise group performed significantly better than the control group for choice stepping reaction time and 6-minute walking distance.
- **Long Term Impact:** There were fewer falls during the trial in the exercise group than in the control group. There were also significantly fewer falls in those who had fallen in the past year.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: The findings indicate that a specifically designed program of group exercise can prevent falls and maintain physical functioning in older people.

Citation(s):

Lord SR, Castell S, Corcoran J, et al. The effect of group exercise on physical functioning and falls in frail older people living in retirement villages: a randomized, controlled trial. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* Dec 2003;51(12):1685-1692.