

Title of Intervention and Website: Wheeling Walks
<http://www.wheelingwalks.org>

Intervention Strategies: Campaigns and Promotions

Purpose of the Intervention: To promote walking in sedentary and irregularly active adults

Population: Sedentary and irregularly active 50-65 year old adults

Setting: Wheeling, West Virginia; worksite-based; community-based; faith-based; healthcare facility-based

Partners: Local health agencies, radio and television stations, newspaper companies, West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, WesBanco, Wheeling Hospital, mayor of Wheeling, Advisory committee, task force, National Park Service, West Virginia Department of Transportation, local rails-to-trails, Wellness Council of West Virginia, local physicians

Intervention Description: The goals of the intervention were to use paid advertising, public relations, and public health education activities to promote 30 minutes or more of daily moderate-intensity walking to effect a 10% increase in the proportion of people that meet the CDC/ACSM/Surgeon General standard for moderate-intensity walking and to effect a 15% forward movement in one or more stages of the transtheoretical model stage of change for regular moderate-intensity walking.

Campaigns and Promotions: paid advertisements: newspaper ads, tv/radio ads; public relations activities: weekly press conferences and campaign events, inviting press to educational programs, photographs of campaign events in newspapers; worksite programs: "Worksite Wellness Walking Challenge" walking campaign packets distributed; website exposure: www.wheelingwalks.org, informed members of overall campaign and upcoming walking events; physician-based counseling: "prescriptions" for walking 30 minutes nearly every day, prescription pads distributed; local health professionals were trained to give presentations about walking and physical activity at worksites and meetings of civic organizations; ministers included the intervention message in church bulletins or at worship services

Theory: Theory of Planned Behavior, Transtheoretical model; Elaboration Likelihood Model

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: community member to maintain website
- Training: not mentioned
- Technology: television/radio ads; internet website
- Space: space for community events and weekly press conferences
- Budget: not mentioned
- Intervention: paid media, public relations, public health activities, walking campaign packets,
- Evaluation: weekly log for minutes walked, technicians to record observations of walkers, telephones,

Evaluation:

- Design: quasi-experimental
- Methods and Measures: pre- and post-intervention telephone surveys measuring physical activity and walking habits in a random sample of households, behavioral observations: college-level research technicians were recruited to observe, count and intercept adult walkers at 5 pre-determined popular walking sites 2 hours each day for 1 week pre- and post-intervention; weekly logs of minutes walked submitted by participants

Outcomes:

- Short term Impact: Behavior observation showed a 23% increase in number of walkers in the intervention community versus no change in the comparison community; 32% of population in intervention community reported walking at least 30 minutes at least five times per week versus 18% in the comparison community; there was an increase in positive stage change in the intervention community

- Long Term Impact: not measured

Maintenance: A long-term ecological and community partnership approach featured a local advisory committee to provide guidance and support. The mayor established a task force to improve the community walking facilities through collaboration with the National Park Service, the West Virginia Department of Transportation, and the local rails-to-trails group. Establishment of an urban park that will include walking trails was explored. Environmental and policy changes will help to promote walking in the community after the completion of the campaign. A booster campaign was planned for 3 months post intervention and at the 11 month mark. The website continues to be online.

Lessons Learned: Generalizability was limited due to the unique characteristics of the intervention community and the lack of additional intervention communities. A cluster randomization efficacy trial with five pairs of similar communities with non-overlapping media markets needs to be conducted.

Citation(s):

Reger, B., L. Cooper, et al. (2002). "Wheeling Walks: a community campaign using paid media to encourage walking among sedentary older adults." *Prev Med* 35(3): 285-92.