

Translating evidence to promote the falls prevention benefits of recreational activities

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Background

Exercise programs which incorporate more than three hours of exercises per week and challenge participants' balance have proven to reduce the rate of falls within community-dwelling older adults.ⁱ However structured exercise programs are not always suitable. To increase awareness of the role recreational activities can have in falls prevention and overcome barriers older adults face to completing exercises, the Stay On Your Feet[®] program, provided by Injury Matters in partnership with the Department of Health Western Australia, developed a number of resources.

Methods

In order to highlight the role of recreational activities in falls prevention Stay On Your Feet[®] completed a literature review of the balance benefits of eleven popular recreational activities. As evidence alone is not sufficient to increase participation in older adults, it was important to translate the evidence into practical, digestible information to motivate older adults to engage in the recreational activities. Five sports were selected; lawn bowls, tennis, golf, dancing and swimming.

Results

Partnerships were formed with leading sporting organisations within each activity to develop a resource, which highlights the key falls prevention benefits such as strength, balance, coordination and agility. Collaboration was mutually beneficial, assisting in the development of appropriate language for the audience, improved reach through utilising the leading organisations networks and increasing the credibility of resources. The leading organisations demonstrate increased confidence to promote key falls prevention messages related to their activities, further increasing reach and credibility through a common message.

Conclusion

Working in partnership with leading sporting organisations to translate evidence into practical resources supports the development, reach and credibility of falls prevention messages.

References

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