

# **Implementing a Community-Based Exercise Program in Congregate Meal Sites: Perspectives From Site Managers**

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# Background

- EnhanceFitness (EF)
- Evaluating effectiveness of health promotion programs in community settings
- Program uptake by individual sites
- Evaluating manager experience
- Improving program adoption and maintenance



# Study Aims

- Describe meal sites and managers
- Describe site manager understanding of EF
- Describe perceived impact of EF on participants and sites
- Identify implementation strategies utilized
- Describe perceived areas for improvement
- Describe manager strategies for sustaining and expanding EF



# Methods

- Developed semi-structured interview guide
- Successfully secured IRB approval
- Secured agreement for participation from 9 of 14 managers
- Conducted face-to-face interviews
- Collected demographic data about sites and manager characteristics
- Used grounded theory to analyze data



# Sample Description

- 9 Managers of congregate meal sites in Portland, OR
- All female, majority Caucasian, average age 50 years (SD=11), working as site manager for an average of 5 years (SD=4.89)
- Site locations: community centers, senior housing, church, county building
- Goals of sites: provide nutrition to seniors and prevent social isolation
- EF classes held for an average of 1.39 yrs (SD=0.49)
- 7 sites had additional exercise programs (Tai Chi, yoga, ballroom dancing)



# Results

- Benefits of EF for individuals and centers
  - Improved overall well-being, increased connections between participants and with center, enhanced centers
- Manager and site involvement in EF
  - Promotion, hospitality, scheduling
- Facilitating factors in adoption of EF
  - Funding, location, manager interest, instructors
- Barriers to adoption of EF
  - Physical space, attendance, instructor commitment
- All managers would recommend EF to other centers





# Conclusions and Implications

- Managers are a vital part of program implementation
- Benefits perceived to be worth the investment
- Implications for further research
  - Increased diversity among participants
  - Perspectives of managers when external funding unavailable



# Insights

- Challenges faced while implementing a health promotion program in the community
- Conducting qualitative research
- Holistic benefits of exercise at any age
- Importance for health care providers to learn about community resources



Thank you for  
your attention and  
interest!

Go exercise!

