

The value of developing a falls prevention exercise video for older adults

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Background

Balance is a key risk factor for falls, with one quarter of all falls among older adults caused by poor balance.¹ To increase awareness of the importance of balance in older adults living independently in Western Australia (WA), the Stay On Your Feet[®] program, provided by Injury Matters in partnership with the Department of Health WA, developed a digital video to educate community members on safe balance exercises.

Methods

Consultations with health professionals (n=15) were undertaken to guide the development of the resource. To develop the content, a physiotherapist and an exercise physiologist were consulted and a draft version was tested with two community focus groups (n=35). Following development, the video was distributed to over 1,300 community members, community groups and health professionals over an eight month period. A subsample of community members were randomly selected and interviewed regarding their use, satisfaction and behaviours since receiving the video.

Results

Interviews with community members produced mixed results. Many respondents showed limited recall of acquiring the video or reported not having watched it. However, of those respondents that had watched the video, they reported it to be relevant and engaging. Respondents reported single viewing was sufficient to understand, remember and apply the exercises. Those that had watched the video self-reported improvements to their balance, which had made a difference to their life including confidence and ability.

Conclusion

Digital education can assist in increasing awareness of falls prevention strategies among community members. Strategies to overcome barriers to uptake should be considered in development.

References

i. Rubenstein LZ. Falls in older people: Epidemiology, risk factors and strategies for prevention. *Age and Ageing*. 2006 Sep 1;35(suppl_2):ii37-ii41.