



FOCUS ON RESEARCH

THE WELL! BINGO PROGRAMME: A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTERVENTION DELIVERED TO OLDER WOMEN IN A BINGO CLUB SETTING

Researchers

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Aim

To test the feasibility of using the Bingo club setting to deliver a group-based physical activity intervention (the pilot Well!Bingo programme) to older, socially disadvantaged women.

Project Outline/Methodology

This study used elements of a community-based participatory approach and in partnership with Stirling Carlton Bingo club. The Well!Bingo intervention was run initially as a 12-week pilot with a before and after study design. The intervention consisted of short (20-35 minute) structured dance-based exercise sessions of varying difficulty delivered 3 times/week in the Bingo club before Bingo games started. This was followed by a social element with refreshments, with instructors delivering pre-defined intervention messages, and participant-designed incentives for attendance. Outcome measures were taken at baseline and after 12 weeks. In-depth follow-up interviews were carried out with attenders and non-attenders, the instructors and Bingo club staff to explore their views and experiences. The intervention was run on two further occasions and further evaluation carried out. Data collection in 'controls' was carried out in a comparator club.

Key Results

Eighteen women participated in the intervention, 15 of whom attended the majority of sessions. Around half came from the two most deprived SIMD quintiles. The intervention was acceptable to participants and evaluated highly by them, as reflected in high retention levels. Enjoyment and the social element were key to engagement. Participant-reported benefits of the intervention centred upon improvements in general health and well-being, possibly mediated by reduced social isolation and sense of belonging. Data from questionnaires suggested improvements in mental well-being and self-efficacy for exercise, but objective accelerometer data relating to physical activity levels were less

conclusive. Participants did report feeling more motivated to exercise.

Conclusions

It is feasible to deliver a group-based physical activity intervention to older, socially disadvantaged women in a Bingo club, although recruitment is time-consuming and challenging. By targeting a Bingo club, not only do we have access to women who need the intervention, there is added value in that we are reaching those who are unlikely to take part in community-based initiatives in the general population. The Well!Bingo intervention is associated with improvements in the perceived health and well-being of participants, but the challenge is to convert observed increases in motivation and self-efficacy for exercise into objective increases in physical activity. There is support for the Well!Bingo intervention in other Carlton clubs in Scotland, but difficulties with collecting data in the comparator club suggest that a cluster RCT would not be an appropriate study design for any future formal evaluation of Well!Bingo.

What does this study add to the field?

Well!Bingo is an innovative approach to capture the interest and commitment of women to behaviour change by involving them in the design of a physical activity intervention intended for them, and delivering it in a setting where women who might not normally engage with health interventions are well-represented.

Implications for Practice or Policy

These go beyond the significant health gains associated with increasing physical activity in older women. Women from areas of socio-economic disadvantage are well-represented in Bingo clubs and Well!Bingo has the potential to impact upon health inequalities by reaching this hard-to-reach group. The Bingo club also has untapped potential for wider health promotion among older people.

Where to next?

Formal evaluation of the Well!Bingo intervention in multiple Bingo clubs across Scotland

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