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Carly H. Watson

The University of Vermont

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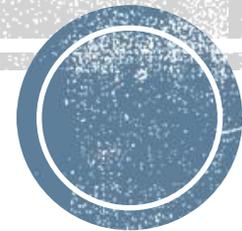
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Walk and Talk:

Implementing outdoor walks into the daily schedules of elderly people in care facilities

Carly Watson, CHCB

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Even though we know it is beneficial...

- There is not enough time engaging in physical activity outdoors for people who live in care facilities
 - EX: At a local memory care unit, staff find it difficult to provide daily walks for residents due to understaffing



Public Health costs & considerations for this unique community

- **Well-being and quality of life in elderly people in care facilities**
 - Socialization!! Being out in the world is correlated with well-being and quality of life. Of those who get out, they most benefit from emerging connections (1).
 - Decreased incidence of dementia!! Regular exercise is associated with a delay in the onset of dementia (2).
 - Helps with dementia symptoms!! Exercise is beneficial at reducing behavioral/psychological symptoms of dementia (depressed mood, agitation, wandering, and night-time sleep) (3).



Community Perspective

- **“We notice a decrease in negative behaviors... and increased focus on cognitive activities”**, states the Director of Community Life of a local memory care facility when asked what the benefits of outdoor activity are for residents
 - She says that the barriers to making outdoor walking a part of daily routine is the fact that they **“need more staff to meet more needs”** with **“availability on a daily basis”**.
- When asked what her favorite thing about outdoor walks is, a memory care resident responded, **“they get me out talkin’ to people. I can move my body”**.



INTERVENTION

- A scheduled walk with a group of residents who are willing to go
 - Methodology:
 - Multiple volunteers - depending on group size
 - Gather residents and make sure they are dressed appropriately
 - Orient to what we are doing/where we are going
 - Walk as a group with volunteers chaperoning the different “speeds”
 - Engage in conversation if able - especially prompts that facilitate reminiscing
 - Re-orient upon arriving back at facility (where we are, what time it is, what is next on the schedule, etc.)



Qualitative Results

- Staff was appreciative of extra assistance in facilitating a walk
- Making sure that residents were appropriately dressed for the weather proved difficult and delayed our departure
- 1:2 ratio of volunteers/staff to residents worked well
- With facilitation, residents engaged in conversation (if able)
- Positive responses from both residents and facility staff when asked for feedback after the walk



Evaluation of Effectiveness

■ Proposals

- Create a survey for facility staff that asks if they notice any immediate behavioral changes in the residents who went for the walk
 - This would evaluate the impact of the walk on the presumed wellbeing of the residents
- Create a checklist for volunteers that evaluates the logistical aspects of the walk
 - This would evaluate which parts of the process could be improved upon (i.e. make sure in advance that there are enough volunteers/staff available to adequately chaperone the number of residents who want to walk)



Future directions

- Volunteers from local high schools and colleges
 - Create a schedule within a network of young people who would be interested in signing up for time slots to take groups of residents for walks
 - This would allow for *consistency*
- Volunteer checklist
 - Create a checklist for volunteers who are interested in facilitating these walks
 - Checklist items would include: ensure appropriate volunteer/resident ration, arrive to facility 10 min early, gather residents, weather-appropriate attire, etc.



References

- 1) Joy M Ciofi, PhD, Candace L Kemp, PhD, Alexis A Bender, PhD, Assisted Living Residents With Dementia: Being Out in the World and Negotiating Connections, *The Gerontologist*, 2021;, gnab113, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnab113>
- 2) Larson, E. B., Wang, L., Bowen, J. D., McCormick, W. C., Teri, L., Crane, P., & Kukull, W. (2006). Exercise Is Associated with Reduced Risk for Incident Dementia among Persons 65 Years of Age and Older. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 144(2), 73–81. <https://doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-144-2-200601170-00004>.
- 3) Thuné-Boyle, I. C. V., Iliffe, S., Cerga-Pashoja, A., Lowery, D., & Warner, J. (2012). The effect of exercise on behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia: Towards a research agenda. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 24(7), 1046–1057. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610211002365>.

