Increasing physical activity levels: Designing a referral pathway to a community- and volunteer-based physical activity programme

Ozakinci, G1; Carstairs, S1; Rogowsky, R1; Cunningham, K1; Wilkie, L1; Stevens, J1; McTavish, M1; Shield, I1; Sullivan, F1.
1School of Medicine, University of St Andrews; 2Scottish Athletics; 3jogscotland

BACKGROUND

- Regular physical activity has been evidenced to help prevent and manage many chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer, and is associated with a reduced risk of all-cause mortality (Lee & Skerrett, 2001).
- It has additionally been proven to improve psychological well-being (Biddle, Fox, & Bouchier, 2005).
- These health benefits of physical activity are acknowledged in global and national action plans to improve the population’s health (WHO, 2018; Scottish Government, 2018).
- Scotland’s aim is to reduce physical inactivity prevalence by 15% by the year 2026 (Scottish Government, 2018). The Action Plan incorporates the aim to encourage social prescribing initiatives which refer patients from the NHS to community-based interventions, which can support increased physical activity (PA).

AIM

We aim to design and pilot a process of referring patients attending primary care to community-based jogscotland groups and to examine the barriers and facilitators of such a process for health professionals and patients.

EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWS
Patients & Health Professionals
+ Rapid Review
+ Analysis of Previous Interviews
Existing jogscotland members

DEVELOPMENT OF REFERRAL PATHWAY

FEASIBILITY STUDY

Can primary care patients be referred from the NHS to community-based programmes?

What about exercise referral schemes?

→ evidence shows that traditional schemes have only a small effect on improving physical activity levels in sedentary individuals (Williams, 2007)

→ suggestion that referral to activities that are based outside of the gym may make individuals ‘stick at it’

What about jogscotland: an example of a community-based programme?

→ More than 440 community and volunteer-led physical activity jogscotland groups exist in Scotland—partnered with Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)

How can we promote behaviour change?

How can we promote behaviour change?

FROM

TO

Research co-production

Engagement with Fife Patient Advisory Group, NHS Fife primary care health professionals, jogscotland staff members, volunteers and participants

METHODS

- GPs and nurses from over 30 practices across Fife have expressed interest in the study to-date.
- Exploratory interviews with health professionals and patients of primary care practices in Fife will be conducted (N=15-25 primary care registered patients with no physical health barriers to engage in physical activity and N=15-25 GPs/nurses)
- Interviews will be guided by Theoretical Domains Framework (Michie et al., 2005) and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
- Informed by feedback from the interviews, a process of referral to jogscotland will be designed around how community-based programmes can acceptably be introduced through GPNurse consultations
- A feasibility study testing this method of referral to jogscotland will be conducted

IMPLICATIONS

- The findings will enable the design of a full trial to test a community-based approach to physical activity participation that would be scalable across Scotland.
- This project will link primary care patients to a structured and volunteer-led physical activity programme in their community that is an alternative to gym-based programmes.
- Providing a unique opportunity to develop a partnership between primary care and community-based physical activity groups.
- The potential of successfully maintaining behaviour change and achieving positive health outcomes for patients, and empowering health professionals.

REFERENCES
