

World Aging Lessons Learned: Engaging Older Adults in International Activities to increase Physical Activity Levels

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this project was to determine how applying longevity techniques in an interactive group setting for older adults affected their physical activity levels and nutritional habits. **METHODS:** Participants consisted of older adults (14 female, 3 male) from two older adult senior centers in the state. The age of participants ranged from 51 to 83 years of age (X age = 70). Participants were educated about the various countries and were given information about the types of physical activity taking place there as well as their lifestyles and habits. Pre and Post test questionnaires for older adults consisted of: Goden Physical Activity Scale, The Blue Zones Vitality Compass, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The program consisted of ten weeks, with two meetings a week for each center. **RESULTS:** There were no significant differences in pre=post satisfaction with life, (Pre: 25.7, Post: 26.4). There were significant increases in the Goden Physical Activity Scale level of frequency of mild physical activity a week (Pre: 1.7, Post: 3.1) ($t=2.8$ $p<0.05$). There were also shown to be significant increases ($p<005$) in the number of times participants completed twenty minutes of vigorous physical activity a week (Pre: 2, Post: 3.3). There were no significant changes within the Vitality Compass life expectancy scores. **CONCLUSIONS:** Overall, older adults who participated in the international activities on a regular basis saw significant increases in their mild physical activity levels and short increments of vigorous physical activity. This would indicate that they are receptive to trying new physical activities and that further exposure would only continue to increase their levels further. While there were not any changes within the Satisfaction with Life Scale, there may have been a ceiling effect in place as many of the participants rated within the top tier of satisfaction in the pre evaluation. This study suggests that exposing older adults to other types of physical activity within a focused group setting as a regular activity within the senior communities has the ability to increase the health and wellness of its members.