

42. SWACSM Abstract

Online Physical Activity Advice for Older Adults during COVID-19: Results of a Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020-present), US. older adults in quarantine likely turned to the internet, often a first source for exercise information, for health and exercise advice. **PURPOSE:** Given adherence to physical activity guidelines (PAGs) lowers risk of sickness and death due to COVID-19, this presentation is to present results of a pilot study which determined the extent online physical activity promotion articles published during the COVID-19 pandemic, with messages tailored to older adults, aligned with US. 2018 PAGs. **METHODS:** Online articles were sought based on an *a priori* inclusion criteria (e.g., targeted older adults, published March 2020-February 2021). Three search engines set to private browsing were used: Bing, Google, and Yahoo. After piloting search terms, an internet search was conducted within a 24-hour period (February 10, 2021). Two review levels (title & full text) narrowed the initial sample from 763 articles to 15. The Content Analysis Approach to Theory-specified Persuasive Educational Communication (CAATSPEC) guided the line-by-line categorization of article messages into three categories: PAG-mismatch, -partial match, - full match. The coding form contained 15 PAGs across four categories: aerobic, muscle, older adult, sedentary adult. The coding form and procedures were refined across three practice phases using a random subset of like, pre-pandemic articles. Reliability was tested with a random subset of the study sample ($n = 9/15$). **RESULTS:** The coding form showed fair between-rater reliability (1st vs 2nd author, ICC = .56) and excellent within-rater reliability (1st author, 3-day grace period, ICC = .99). Articles in the pilot sample contained the following fitness topics: aerobic (100%), muscle (78%) and safety (78%). Twenty-six advisements had explicitly aligned with 8 PAGs. Most tallies were partial matches (92%). No mismatches were observed. Most tallies were older adult PAGs (46%), then sedentary lifestyle (36%), then muscle fitness (15%). Zero statements aligned with aerobic PAGs. **CONCLUSION:** Pilot data suggests older adults seeking credible advice for maintaining their health during COVID-19 likely receive little advice matching PAGs through online articles. Implication of these findings and project next steps will be presented.