Falls, fractures and trauma

SEDENTARY OLDER PARTICIPANTS WHO VOLUNTEER FOR STRUCTURED EXERCISE PROGRAMMES ARE NOT LIKE OTHER COMMUNITY DWELLING OLDER SEDENTARY PEOPLE

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Introduction: Sedentary behaviour is bad for health, even in those who achieve the recommended levels of moderately vigorous physical activity. Older people are the most sedentary, and sedentary behaviour is associated with gender, age, income, education, falls, co-morbidities and polypharmacy. We aimed to explore the characteristics of sedentary older people enrolled in a health promotion and exercise trial and compare them with sedentary older people in previous epidemiological studies.

Methods: Data collected from participants in the PROACT65+ trial between 2009-2011 were categorised into two groups - sedentary or not. The sedentary group reported sitting for > 4 hours/day on > 5 days per week. Covariates examined were demographic data, health status, self-rated function and physical test performance (including Timed-Up-and-Go, chair stand, falls risk, functional reach). The complete data sets of 918 participants were analysed.

Results: The sedentary were more likely to be underweight (BMI <18.5) or overweight (BMI >25) (OR 1.563, CI 1.109-2.203), to have been smokers (OR 1.488, CI 1.064-2.082) and to be limited in their daily activities on more than 5 days/month (OR 2.217, CI 1.047-4.692). Contrary to previous epidemiological studies, participants’ sedentary behaviour was not associated with gender, age, income, education, falls, number of co-morbidities or polypharmacy.

Conclusion: Community exercise trials can recruit sedentary older people. However, sedentary participants in this large multi-centre structured exercise programme were different from community-dwelling sedentary older people in epidemiological studies. Trial participants are a different, perhaps more motivated cohort, even when habitually sedentary.