A Matter of Balance: An Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Program
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INTRODUCTION
Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of death (CDC, 2012a). Each year, one third of adults will experience a fall (CDC, 2008). In 2010, the direct medical cost for falls was $30 billion (CDC, 2013).

Approximately 50% of community-dwelling older adults report a fear of falling (FOF) (Zijlstra et al., 2007). Older adults often believe that limiting activity will reduce the risk of falls. Instead lack of physical activity can increase the risk of falling (Arizona Fall Prevention Coalition, 2010).

Falls are not a natural consequence of aging and most falls can be prevented (CDC, 2012b). The purpose of this poster is to: (a) introduce to the audiology community A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls (MOB) program and (b) to describe its implementation at A. T. Still University (ATSU).

A MATTER OF BALANCE Managing Concerns about Falls

❖ A Matter of Balance (MOB) is an evidence-based program focusing on multifaceted intervention of physical exercises and self-efficacy activities designed to reduce FOF
❖ This nationally recognized program was developed at the Royal Center at Boston University in 2004
❖ The program is composed of eight two-hour sessions per week with small groups (8 to 12 participants) led by facilitators (coaches) who are trained by Master Trainers
❖ A Master Trainer receives two days of training and is responsible for teaching the MOB curriculum to coaches

In 2006, ATSU adopted MOB as a component of its University-Wide Aging Studies Project

The MOB program at ATSU recruits students as coaches from the audiology, athletic training, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and Doctor of Osteopathy programs

Student-led 8-week classes are held in community, recreation, and senior centers across the Phoenix metro area

The ATSU MOB program serves a culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) population including the Hispanic, Chinese-American, Native-American, and Deaf communities

Since 2009, ATSU students have served about 2000 seniors across 30 sites and 14 municipalities in Arizona including:
❖ Phoenix, Tempe, Apache Junction, Fountain Hills, Sun City, Mesa, Gilbert, Scottsdale, Chandler, Glendale, Surprise, Deer Valley, Gila Bend, and Gila River Indian Reservation

The MOB program at ATSU has seven Community Partners that invite MOB in and recruit participants. Our partners include:
❖ Banner Health
❖ City of Phoenix
❖ City of Scottsdale
❖ Dignity Health (St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center)
❖ East Valley Adult Resources
❖ Hometown America Communities
❖ Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center (Barrow Neurological Institute)
❖ Scan Health Plan Arizona

AUDIOLOGY AND MOB

Currently, ATSU has 16 Master Trainers across disciplines; two in the Audiology program

ATHLETICS AND MOB: THE CHALLENGES

MOB training occurs at off-campus community-based centers

Early Challenges Included
❖ Access to the senior population
❖ Competing activities at community sites
❖ Student schedules/availability
❖ Student interest and motivation
❖ Faculty availability and interest to train as Master Trainers
❖ Faculty availability to supervise students at off-campus sites
❖ Concerns regarding student and participant liability

What We Learned
❖ Program development was slow – ~ 3 years
❖ The need to be flexible and up-front about the program
❖ Maintaining simple and consistent communication with everyone
❖ Makes it easy for the site managers and target population
❖ Reduces frustrations and increasing participation
❖ Need for more administrative staff; faculty cannot do it alone!!

WHY MOB WORKS AT ATSU

❖ Commitment of the University and administration to the program
❖ The program addresses the concerns of the community
❖ It provides inter-generational training to future health professionals
❖ The program meets the goals of the ATSU’s Aging Studies Project, which include:
   ❖ Focusing on in-class didactic education and community-based learning
   ❖ Establishing collaborations with external entities
   ❖ Implementing model programs that improve the quality of life for seniors

RESEARCH RESULTS

Alexander et al. (2013), performed a study to compare MOB outcomes between a student-led model and a lay-leader model. The study included 75 participants (mean age = 76.8 years) in the Arizona cohort and 176 MOB participants (mean age = 76.8 years) in the National cohort. Outcomes were based on the adherence
❖ Attendance for 2.5 sessions
❖ Likert-scale questions regarding efficacy
❖ Concern/Fear of falling
❖ Exercise frequency

Preliminary results showed that a student-led model appeared as effective as the lay-leader model but further research is needed to fully understand the efficacy of the student-led model

In another study, Bordenave & Bordenave (2014) surveyed the influence of MOB on students coaches. Benefits to students included
❖ Enhanced understanding and awareness of aging issues
❖ Development of leadership skills
❖ Teaching an evidence-based program
❖ Working on an interdisciplinary team
❖ An appreciation of community-based research

ONGOING MOB RESEARCH AT ATSU


REFERENCES