

23rd World Nursing and Healthcare Conference

July 10-12, 2017 Berlin, Germany

Adapting and evaluating a community based falls prevention program for visually impaired older people: The qualitative findings

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Visually impaired older people (VIOP) are likely to fall and injure themselves. Unfortunately they have poor compliance to preventative home-based exercise. This paper reports on the qualitative findings of a mixed methods feasibility study that aimed to adapt the existing falls management exercise program (FaME) in order to facilitate uptake and adherence by VIOP. Prior to the delivery of the FaME program, four focus groups exploring its' adaptation took place with 14 VIOP from two UK geographic locations. Following completion of the 12-week adapted FaME program intervention, nine VIOP completed one-to-one in-depth interviews. Interviews also took place pre-and post the intervention delivery with two postural stability instructors (PSIs). Analysis of data took a broad thematic approach. Findings from the interviews focused on exercise individualization to facilitate personal choice, a preference for small group numbers, and a desire the PSIs had specific training on visual impairments. Findings from VIOP who fully completed the intervention, identified positive aspects such as improved strength and balance and social engagement. Some felt they were not physically challenged enough, suggesting a differing perception regarding individual falls risk and how specific exercises affected this. The PSIs agreed appropriate balance challenge had been a concern, both for those who wished for more challenge and those, who due to multiple comorbidities, required a more tailored approach. Collaborative adaptation and evaluation of the FaME program has led to the first falls prevention intervention manual for VIOP.

Biography

Coe D is currently working as a Research Assistant at the University of Newcastle, Campus for Ageing and Vitality. She has worked for 22 years as a Specialist Nurse in the National Health Service and for 7 years as a Higher Education Lecturer. She obtained her PhD in 2014 using social constructionist methods to explore, from a nurse's perspective, the concept of caring. Her current research interest focuses on aging and age related illness. She has published in *BMJ Open journal* and the *Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research*.

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