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Interpretive qualitative evaluation motor cognitive integration, exercise and movement based program

David Lazris
Emory School of Medicine, USA

Background and Objectives: An estimated 10% to 20% of Americans aged 65 or older have Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) with 10% progressing to Alzheimer's Disease (AD) each year. Recently, literature has demonstrated that exercise and movement-based programs can improve cognitive function when compared to the general population. This work is from two focus groups of community members who suspected they have mild MCI with facilitated discussion to learn more about attitudes and beliefs towards motor-cognitive integration and exercise as well as a research project designed to study movement's interaction with cognitive impairment.

Methods: We conducted two focus groups with a representative group of six and nine older adults (mean age 71.7 years SD 5.8) who believed they had MCI. Participants were diverse with respect to race, socio-economic status, education level, sex, and marital status.

Results: Findings from thematic analysis show most participants knew many of the benefits of exercise when it came to reducing medication, focus improvement, less mental health issues, and increased community building. Even with this knowledge, most participants were not getting adequate exercise due to many factors including pain, increased responsibilities, and safety fears. There was excitement for a program studying movements interaction with brain health as well as suggested improvements to the study.

Conclusion: Results provide useful insights regarding improving participation among hard-to-reach and historically under-represented groups in clinical movement-based research. The perceived benefits and limitations to exercise can help explain the general population's perceptions on movement and its place in health.