The Active Aging Blueprint: A National Initiative for the Promotion of Successful Aging

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, PhD
Department of Kinesiology
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign
USA
Overview

- The Aging of America
- Physical Activity
- Physical Inactivity
- Active Aging Blueprint
- Going Beyond the Physical
America is Aging

- 2000 - 35 million over 65 yrs.
- By 2030, 70 million over 65 yrs.
- 85 plus age group is fastest growing age group
- By 2050 the 85 plus age group will increase to almost 5% of our population

Source: NIA, 2000
Aging and Health

- 88% of over 65 have at least one chronic health condition
- 21% of over 65 have chronic disabilities.

Source: NIA, 2000
Aging and Health

- 60% of people age 70 and older report having arthritis.
- 50% of women age 70 to 80 have difficulty walking a few blocks, climbing a flight of stairs, or doing housework.

Source: NIA, 2000
Aging and Health

- Osteoporosis is a major health threat for 28 million Americans.
- Accounts for 1.5 million fractures a year
- 24% of people over 50 who have hip fractures die within a year

Source: AGS, 2000
Aging and Health

33% or more people age 85 and older have moderate or severe cognitive impairment.

Source: NIA, 2000
Physical Activity
Physical Activity - Defined

"...All movements in everyday life, including work, recreation, exercise, and sporting activities... "

WHO, 1997
Physical Activity

Provides the greatest opportunity to extend years of active independent life, reduce disability, and improve the quality of life for older persons.

Source: NIA, 2000
Physical Activity

There is no segment of the population that can benefit more from exercise than the elderly.

Source: ACSM, 2000
Physical Activity

Benefits
WHO Guidelines
Reasons for Physical Activity

- Benefits for the individual
  - Physiological
  - Psychological
  - Social

Chodzko-Zajko et al, 1997
Physiological Long Term Benefits

- Aerobic/cardiovascular endurance
- Resistive training/muscle strengthening
- Flexibility
- Balance/coordination
- Velocity of movement

Chodzko-Zajko et al, 1997
Psychological Long Term Benefits

- General Well Being
- Improved Mental Health
- Cognitive Improvements

Chodzko-Zajko et al, 1997
Social Long Term Benefits

- Enhanced Integration
- Formation of new friendships
- Widened Social and Cultural Networks
- Role maintenance and new role acquisition

Chodzko-Zajko et al, 1997
Reasons for Physical Activity for Society

- Reduced Health and Social Care Costs
- Enhancing the Productivity of Older Adults
- Promoting a Positive and Active Image of Older Persons

Chodzko-Zajko et al, 1997
Who Should Be Active?

Healthy  Less-Healthy  Frail
Physical Inactivity
Physical Inactivity

- 38% of population age 55 and older is sedentary.

Source: NIA, 2000
Physical Inactivity

33% of men and 50% of women age 75 and older engage in no physical activity

Source: NIA, 2000
Physical Inactivity

Prevalence of inactivity among white women age 75 and older is 47.4%.

61% among black women age 75 and older.

Source: NIA, 2000
Physical Inactivity

Fewer than 50% of older adults ever receive a suggestion to exercise from their physicians

Source: NIA, 2000
Adjusted* Odds Ratios for Development of Functional Limitations

Cardiorespiratory Fitness Categories

*Adjusted for age, BMI, length of follow-up, smoking status

Blair, 1999
Participating Organizations

- 46 National Organizations including…
- The National Institute on Aging
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- AARP
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- American College of Sports Medicine
- American Geriatrics Society
Barriers to Physical Activity

- Research
- Community
- Work Place
- General
- Medical Systems
- Marketing
Barriers - General

- No national organization to systemically address physical activity of older Americans
- Physical activity engineered out of many routine activities.
Barriers - Research

- Lack of research about how to achieve long-term increases in physical activity
- Inadequate translation of research findings into practical guidelines
Barriers - Community

- Poorly designed and unsafe environments
- Neighborhoods discourage physical activity
- Need integrated community approach to enabling physical activity.
Barriers – Work Place

- Insufficient data about cost-to-benefit ratio to employer
- Concerns about employer liability
- Little information about model programs
Barriers – Medical Systems

- Inadequate medical education
- Health care professionals lack time to address physical activity
- No easy-to-use protocol for activity counseling
Barriers – Marketing and Communications

- Messages about physical activity and exercise are unclear, inconsistent, and confusing
- Need mass media campaign about physical activity and aging
Solutions - General

- Develop National Clearinghouse on Physical Activity and Aging
- Increase collaborations between public and private sector organizations
Solutions - Research

- Increase funding for behavioral research
- Study active seniors - who are they, what do they do, what are their stories
- Build translational component into funded studies
Solutions - Community

- Identify individuals in the community who can serve as resources
- Disseminate information about model programs
- Encourage non-traditional partnerships (urban planners, transportation, medical systems, physical activity specialists)
Solutions – Work Place

• Provides employers with tax incentives for physical activity programs

• Develop time sharing models of physical activity

• Work with health care provider and HMO’s
Solutions – Medical Systems

- Improve medical education
- Develop specific physical activity counseling protocols
- Encourage active referral systems
Solutions – Public Policy

- Consider incentives to states and communities that achieve measurable increases in the activity levels
- Develop HCFA/Medicare benefits guidelines related to physical activity
Call to Action

National Blueprint: Active Aging