

Background

Time spent being sedentary (sitting/lying down) has emerged as a 'hot topic' in recent years because of its links with increased risk of poor physical and mental health, independent of the amount of physical activity undertaken.

Sedentary behaviour is a particular problem in older people, who spend over 75% of their waking day sitting, more than any other age group.

A research team at the University of Glasgow is currently leading a qualitative study within a Medical Research Council funded project, Seniors USP (Understanding Sedentary Patterns), to understand why older people sit, and what they do when they are not sitting. The team has conducted in-depth interviews with 44 older men and women on their views of sedentary behaviour. The interviews provide rich and novel insights on when sitting is important and not important to older adults, and when and how sitting could potentially be replaced with non-sitting activities.



The current project

The University of Glasgow team has secured some funding from the Economic and Social Research Council to collaborate with Paths for All to translate the results from Seniors USP into new guidance and interventions to support older people to sit less. The project will run from December 2016 to June 2017, and has three main objectives:

Objective 1: To develop sedentary behaviour information resources (e.g. a top tips cue card)

Objective 2: To develop and pilot training materials on reducing sedentary behaviour for integration into existing Paths for All walk-leader training courses.

Objective 3: To describe the key components and delivery mechanism of a future intervention to reduce sedentary behaviour in older adults.

We aim to develop and refine the new resources and training materials by holding interactive workshops with older adults (aged 60+ years) and volunteers who lead walking groups. We will then ask the walk leaders to pilot the resources with older adults who attend their walking groups. Finally, we will interview some of the walk leaders and their group members to find out their views of the sedentary behaviour resources and training materials, and their thoughts on what future interventions to reduce sedentary behaviour in older adults might include.

Outputs

- 1) The sedentary behaviour information resources will be disseminated through the Paths for All website, and made available for walk leaders and other older adult organisations.
- 2) The training materials will be integrated into existing Paths for All walk-leader and care home staff training courses.
- 3) The key components identified will be used to apply for funding to develop and test the feasibility and potential effectiveness of new technology-supported interventions to reduce sedentary behaviour in older adults.

For more information about the project and how you might be able to help, please contact:

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