

DRAFT Recommendations for ECSS position paper, Oslo June 2009

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How to increase the physical activity behaviour of older adults (60-76 years)

- Individual factors

Enhance self efficacy of older people by advice and counseling. Work on booster sessions for instance by telephone contact or electronic or written materials.

Make sure that people can choose for good quality and effective group-based and home-based PA programmes or change of individual PA lifestyles (such as more regular walking or biking), just as they like. Aerobe, strength and flexibility training should be included following the national and international standards.

- Social factors

Assertive screening of inactive populations is recommended by Campbell (2009) as described by Young and Dinan (ref see in Campbell): “enabling, pre-exercise medical review that will facilitate safe and effective recreational participation” and in Scott et al (2008). However, unnecessary safety screening, medical clearance and detailed questions should be avoided. Health checks by instructors are only necessary to decide the level of PA difficulty. Valid and reliable screenings measures to identify populations at risk are still to be developed.

Use existing relapse prevention techniques as much as possible (such as the use of activity buddies or telephone support).

Use public campaigns to enhance awareness of the importance of PA for older adults, including publications in lay literature.

- Environmental factors

Use “point-of decisions”, for instance by stimulating stair use using messages and cues.

Design local walking and cycling routes and give information about these. The use of concept mapping (Kelly et al, 2007) could be helpful to ensure participation of community members in the designing of environmental interventions.

How to increase the physical activity behaviour of old-old (75+ years)

Besides the recommendations for old persons:

- Individual factors

Staging is important, this means trying to improve PA behaviour in small steps (“every day 5 minutes more”). Aerobe, strength and flexibility training should be included following the national and international standards.

- Social factors

After careful screening of target populations and riskfactors, doctors and other caregivers should promote PA and refer to good quality programmes in the direct environment. The public should be made more aware of the importance of PA for themselves and for older people.

- Environmental factors

In homes for the elderly and nursing homes more awareness of the importance of environmental cues is necessary. Corridors should be easy walkable and rooms spacious enough for exercises. To improve walking outside, assistance of volunteers and/or the use Global Positioning Systems systems could be considered. People with high risks of falling should be first trained in a safe environment.