BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Walking has great potential to engage people in physical activity (PA), and could address health problems associated with sedentary living. Previous research showed increasing walking behaviour in inactive adults aged 18-65 years is feasible (Fitzsimons et al 2008). However, a systematic review showed that evidence on how to encourage older adults to increase walking is lacking (Ogilvie et al 2007).

STUDY AIM

To test a pedometer-based walking programme in combination with a PA consultation with adults aged 65 years+ in a primary care setting and to design a study protocol that enables shared learning outcomes.

INTERVENTION METHODOLOGY

- West End Walkers 65+: (WEW 65+) will recruit 46 participants, aged 65 years or more over 12 months.
- Participants will be allocated to two groups: Group 1 will receive a Physical activity consultation, individualised walking programme and pedometer; Group 2 is a waiting list control group who will receive the intervention after 11 weeks.
- Step counts, activity patterns and psychological measures will be assessed pre and post intervention. Focus groups and interviews will be completed with participants and stakeholders post intervention.
- Figure 1 demonstrates the proposed time scale for the study.

INTERVENTION METHODOLOGY

- Intervention feasibility will be assessed using a programme theory, which conceptualises steps taken to bring about desired outcomes by representing the logic underpinning the intervention (Rossi et al 1998).
- Programme theory is produced by articulation of:
  - Intended outcomes,
  - Implemented activities delivering these outcomes, and
  - The contextual issues that could enhance or derail the success, delivery and impact of the intervention.
- The resultant theory is then critiqued to establish the extent to which it is ‘plausible’, ‘doable’ and ‘testable’ (Connel and Kubisch, 1998).
- The theory is then refined and revisited. It guides implementation and uncovers where the articulated theory has, or has not, successfully delivered. It also enables shared learning outcomes to be captured.
- Logic modelling is an approach which aims to provide a ‘roadmap’ or ‘journey’ that projects the sequence of related events that logically come together to deliver desired outcomes. Figure 2 represents a logic model for the West End Walkers 65+ intervention.

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Figure 2. Logic Model for the WEW 65+ study. Outcomes are made more explicit using this model, so that wider learning can be disseminated.

ASSESSING WEW 65+ USING PROGRAMME THEORY

A triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research measures will inform this assessment. Measures will include Focus Groups, interviews with project staff and chronological record keeping. Feasibility will be assessed using goals designed to promote shared and transferable learning outcomes.

REFERENCES