“I have to go on and do what I got to do....”
Preliminary Findings from a Qualitative Study about Facilitators and Barriers to Physical Activity among Overweight and Obese Older Veterans

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Objectives

- To provide a brief overview about the benefits of physical activity in advanced age
- To briefly discuss my qualitative research study
- To share preliminary findings
Introduction

- Benefits to physical activity, especially in advanced age
  - Prevention and management of chronic health conditions\(^1\)
  - Improves quality of life\(^2\) and well-being\(^3\)
  - Reduces the risk of falls\(^4\)
Older veterans may have sustained injuries during war or military service that may limit their ability to be physically active in late life.\(^5\)

Older veterans receiving care at the VA report fair to poor health, as well limitations in ADLs and IADLs.\(^6\)

Older veterans receiving care at the VA tend to have lower incomes, less education, and be minority.\(^7\)
Objectives of Study

- To identify facilitators and barriers to physical activity among older veterans who are overweight or obese
Social Determinants of Health are “the environmental conditions in which individuals are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that can affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.”

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Theoretical Approach
Social Determinants of Health

- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Economic Stability
- Health and Health Care
- Social and Community Context
- Education

SDOH
Eligibility requirements

- ≥65 years of age
- Receive health care at the Birmingham VAMC
- Received a referral from their PCP to participate in MOVE
- Pass cognitive screening
Methods

- Participants identified based on referral to the VA’s weight-management program
- Mailed a letter with an “opt-in” form
- Veterans who returned the opt-in form were contacted and preliminary screened over the phone
- Scheduled meeting for cognitive screening and interview
- In-depth semi-structured interviews
Qualitative Analysis

- Qualitative Content Analysis\[^{10}\]
  - Used to analyze text data
- Summative content analysis
  - More than word counts
  - Includes latent content analysis
Demographics

Native American, 1

White, 10

Black, 11
Demographics

- **Age**
  - 65-84 years old
  - Mean 69.9 years ($SD = 5.05$)

- **Gender**
  - 4 Females
  - 18 Males

- **Marital status**
  - 12 Married
  - 10 Not married
Demographics

Education

- HS Grad/GED: 3
- Some college: 4
- College Grad: 15
Demographics

- **Income**
  - Over 50% reported $35,000 or more

- **Branch of Service**
  - Over 70% reported serving in the Army
Health Characteristics

- **BMI**
  - 27.8-43.4 (m = 34.6, SD = 4.70)

- **Blood pressure**
  - Systolic 100-169 (m = 131.04, SD = 18.66)
  - Diastolic 58-75.45 (m = 75.45, SD = 8.80)

- **Hemoglobin A1c**
  - 6.74 (SD = 2.07)
Preliminary Findings

- Facilitators
  - Health benefits
  - Having a dog
  - Family & Friends
Preliminary Findings

- Health Benefits

  - I enjoy walking…and I have these “old football knees” and both these knees have been replaced, but it does not hamper me from walking….my arthritis flares up in one of my knees or the other, but if I get out there and walk it out, then I get rid of it.

  - Well I got to where I would bend over… my wind would cut off…[chuckles]…I couldn’t tie up my shoes!
Preliminary Findings

- Having a dog

- We have a little poodle, she's 14 but she likes to walk....and we typically expect her to walk at least a mile...and it's up and down hill...you’re going up a hill...and she will go right along, so she keeps me moving...I think everyone should get a little dog or a big dog or whatever...I suggest that everybody go out and get a little dog, an ornery dog.
Family & Friends

- I started walking with the girl next door....she’s a chubby little thing too...I was walking, me and her...three-six miles twice a day
- I got some friends, we walk together... so we were doing Railroad Park...we tend to do much better walking as a group.
Preliminary Findings

- Barriers
  - Pain
  - Weather
  - Family & Friends
Preliminary Findings

- Pain
  - *I don’t know if my physical condition has deteriorated cause of not being active or because the health [inaudible]...one knee gives me a lot of pain when I walk for long distance. I got a hip...my sister says it’s my hip joint cause of where it hurts [inaudible] probably going to be due for a hip replacement...I don’t know if it’s because of the inactivity or because my body is falling apart.*
Preliminary Findings

- Pain

- I guess I thought having knee replacements would be like having new knees, but it's not...there's not as much pain...you can't stand too long either because it gets to hurting so.

- I think it's psychological maybe, but I know the pain is real. Like today, I was sitting longer...it hurts, that's not mental there, that's physical.
Preliminary Findings

- Weather
  - *If it’s cold, I’m not interested in doing it…if it’s cold, I’m not going out.*
  - *It depends on the time of year…in the winter, I walk less.*
  - *I just stopped when it got hot.*
Family & Friends

- Sometimes my wife will go with me, but I normally go by myself....you know...cause...that way..., when I’m walking, I’m not holding nobody else up or they not holding me up...everybody go at their own pace.... sometimes she walks so slow, I have to go on and do what I got to do....
Conclusions

- High exercise efficacy
- High interests in physical activity
- Pain is a major barrier to physical activity, as well as environmental factors


