BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE WHILE LIVING WITH PAIN: MULTI-USER PERSPECTIVES FROM URBAN, RURAL, AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES IN SASKATCHEWAN

Susan Tupper, PT, PhD
Saskatoon Health Region, Pain Management

INTRODUCTION / AIM

Although physical activity (PA) is recommended for people living with persistent pain (PWP), most do not meet health recommendations (150+ minutes/week). Our purpose was to explore diverse perspectives on PA for PWP to inform long-term goals of developing programming/educational supports to be active.

METHODS

Focus groups were conducted in Saskatchewan, Canada in urban, rural, northern communities. Separate focus groups were held with (a) PWP, (b) significant others (SO), (c) health care providers (HCP), and (d) PA service providers (PASP) in each setting. Inductive thematic analysis was conducted after each group using iterative verification with successive groups.

RESULTS

Ten focus groups were held with participants ranging from 24-85 years (Mean=56.79 [SD=16.13]; n=29 PWP; n=10 SO; n=10 HCP; n=14 PASP). Three primary themes emerged: opportunities, knowledge, and supports. Opportunities: many structured PA opportunities exist in the urban setting but few for PWP. Uncertainty about safe/recommended activities was expressed by PWP, SO, and HCP. Liability restrictions prevent PASP from advertising activity programs for chronic pain. Knowledge: participants acknowledged the need for more information on pain and PA for PWP. As expected, HCPs aim for diagnostic certainty before recommending PA. Primary strategies for pain management during PA were avoidance, limitation, and modification, with limited awareness of psychological coping strategies. Supports: PWP want a range of PA options (e.g. one-on-one, supervised group) plus safety and pain management information. HCP and PASP want PA education workshops for PWP.

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS

Participants acknowledged PA benefits and the need for more information and training for all groups to support PWP to be active.

OTHER AUTHORS

Miranda Cary
Nancy Gyurcsik
Don Ratcliffe-Smith

This is reference material for delegates of the Canadian Pain Society Annual Scientific Meeting 2016 and is not intended for any other use or distribution.
Larry Brawley