



A Study on the Effectiveness of the Intervening Health Care Program for Elderly People Aged 65 and Above in Preventing and Delaying Disability

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INTRODUCTION

With a lower fertility rate and an uptick in the average life expectancy in recent years, Taiwan's population is ageing at an ever-increasing rate, with the proportion of people aged 65 or older to the total population reaching 16.85% in December 2020, officially entering an aged society. To prevent disability, a multi-care program, including strength training, stretching and balance training, is an effective preventive measure to reduce the risk of falls in the elderly population, improving their lower limb muscle strength, balance control, walking ability and decreasing the incidence of falls and injuries, which is why this research was conducted.

AIM

To raise awareness of frailty and fall prevention by $\geq 10\%$ and enhance physical function by $\geq 5\%$ to improve lower limb muscle strength and prevent falls among community-dwelling seniors aged 65 and above participating in the program.

METHOD

This study was carried out in a medical unit C in Northern Taiwan for elderly people aged 65 years and older taking part in a community-based wellness program called the "Muscle Strength Building and Ageing Prevention - Frailty Free Health Program," which was introduced from September to November 2022. The health program lasted for 8 weeks, with 2 hours of classes per week, and featured a variety of sessions, including health education classes, instruction on resistance band training and exercise techniques. Post-testing was undertaken two weeks after the wrap-up of the intervening wellness program to track the effectiveness of the program. Research tools include key person interviews, participant observation, self-administered structured questionnaires and physiological measures. The Microsoft EXCEL package was used to calculate numbers, percentages, standard deviations and means.

RESULTS

From September to November 2022, a total of 56 cases were enrolled by purposive sampling and after the intervention of the wellness program, it was found that after the training sessions of 2 hours per week for eight consecutive weeks, for a total of 16 hours, the percentage of correct answers for the awareness of frailty prevention and control among the community seniors who participated in the health program increased from 68.4% to 91.2%, up 22.8%; the percentage of correct answers for the awareness of fall prevention rose from 56.2% to 86.9%, up 30.7%; and the average number of stands at the 30-second sit-to-stand tests climbed from 14.5 to 16.3, up 12.4%, indicating that this study has achieved its objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The intervening health promotion activities that have altered the senior citizens' awareness of frailty control and fall prevention and the 30-second sit-to-stand test for the physical function all showed significant improvement among the elderly participants and achieved the targets.



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