How can GPs better target the general population and those with a longstanding illness/disability for physical activity and sport participation counselling?

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Aging UK Population + % with a disability: 2001 v 2011
Not being physically active (physical INACTIVITY) is more common in adults who have arthritis than in those who don't.

Data from Arthritis Research UK
Introduction

• Reduced sport + physical activity levels

Health inequalities

• ~70% population – r/w by GP/yr

• Participation in physical activity and sport - factors:
  – Social
  – Cultural
  – Environmental

• 1st NI & UK study
AIM

• Identify levels of sport participation
• The correlates of sport participation
• General population + those with a long standing illness or disability within the NI adult population
Methods

• Continuous Household Survey: 2007-11
  – 13,683 adults
  – 3550 (26%) long-standing illness/disability
  – participation in sport at least once in the last year

• Groupings:
  – Full study population
  – Longstanding illness/disability
  – No long-term health problems

• Independent predictor variables

• Chi-squared; Uni-variate (p<0.1); Multi-variate (p<0.05) analyses
Results

• Long-term illness v gen pop:
  – Female, older, single, deprived
  – Household access to a car
  – Unemployed
  – Benefits
  – Lower educational attainment
  – Less likely participate in sport
  – Less likely to be sport club member
  – Less internet access
Sport correlates - Full study population

- Being male + <56yo
- Having a household car/van
- Higher educational qualifications
- Employed
- Living in urban area

- Health in last yr – ‘good’/‘fairly good’
- Non-smoker
- Internet access
- Sports club membership
- Not having a long-term limiting illness/disability
Long-term illness/disability – sport correlates

- Differences with full study population:
  - Single
  - Having some qualifications v none
  - Socio-economic deprivation

- Smoking + internet access – no influence
Discussion

• 26% long-term illness or disability
  – lower than other areas of the UK
• Living in urban locations
  – positively correlate with sport participation
  – Government/councils: access to infra-structure?
  – Relevance to GPs
Discussion

• People with a long-term illness/disability
  – less access to internet
  – not members of sports organisations

• GPs should target those with a long-term illness or disability and:
  – Married/Co-habiting
  – Socio-economically deprived
  – Female
  – Older age (>55yo)
  – Health ‘not good’ in previous year
  – Unemployed
  – Living in a rural location
Strengths & Limitations

• Strengths:
  – Used existing data - representative of NI + UK
  – Self-completed questionnaires
  – Respondents blinded to the focus of this study

• Limitations:
  – Variation in interpretation of questions
  – May be other relevant variables
  – Adult data
  – No external validation
  – Cross-sectional study
Conclusions

• Correlates of sport participation – multi-factorial

• Correlates different for general population + long-term illness/disability

• GP focus in those with a disability/long-term illness:
  – older females
  – married/co-habiting
  – socio-economically deprived
  – living in rural areas
  – no personal internet access
  – health ‘not good’ in past year