

On the Move

The Newsletter of COTA's Physical Activity Unit

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January/February 2008



Our first newsletter

Happy New Year!

Welcome to 2008, and to the first newsletter from the Physical Activity Unit at the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Vic. We hope to produce our newsletter every two months—the next will be the March/April edition.

Some of you, particularly our *Living Longer Living Stronger™* partners will have received newsletters from COTA Vic in the past. From now on our newsletter will be a little different.

The content will reflect the broader range of activities of COTA Vic's Physical Activity Unit, established in 2007. We hope it will contain something of interest for all of you and we value your ideas and input.

Please contact Robyn, Mitsuko or Stephanie (see page 2 for our contact details) if you have any comments or contributions, including articles or web sites likely of interest. We look forward to hearing from you.

COTA Vic's Physical Activity Unit

The Physical Activity unit focuses on the role of physical activity in enabling people to achieve their potential throughout their lives and ensuring that older people have access to a range of appropriate physical activity opportunities.

Our goal is to increase the proportion of older people participating in sufficient (time, intensity and range of) physical activity to improve their health.

Our **aims** are:

1. To encourage and support older people to be physically active by:
 - ▶ Increasing awareness and understanding of the benefits of physical activity
 - ▶ Increasing the range of appropriate opportunities to be physically active
 - ▶ Changing community attitudes towards older peoples' participation in physical activity.
2. To increase the number and range of appropriate opportunities for older people to be physically active.

The Physical Activity Unit's main activities and projects include:

- ▶ Living Longer Living Stronger™ (LLLS™)
- ▶ Healthy Older People (HOP): COTA's PICSAR project (see page 4)
- ▶ Leaders in Fitness Education (L.I.F.E) for older adults Special Interest Group
- ▶ COTA Cycling.

The Physical Activity Team

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Living Longer Living Stronger™: Moving forward

Partner forum and feedback

Our LLLS™ Partner forum was conducted on 2 November 2007 and provided us with some very valuable food for thought. It was pleasing to note that the list of 'What's working well' was considerably longer than the list of 'What's not'. By now, you should all have had the opportunity to comment on the resulting report—if not, please contact either Stephanie or Mitsuko (above for contact details). That information will now go to our first Advisory Committee meeting, which we hope will be held early in 2008.

Peer education (see story below)

Our research suggests 'word of mouth' is one of the most effective means of promoting LLLS™. Our peer education program can train volunteers to do just that. If you have LLLS™ participants who are willing and able to help you (and us) spread the word about strength training, we would love to hear from you.

Advance notice: 2008 LLLS™ Conference

The LLLS™ Conference will be held from 10.00 am to 3.30 pm on Tuesday 22 July 2008 at Victoria University in Flinders St Melbourne. This year's theme is 'Taking LLLS™ into the future'. Put this date in your diaries now.

Active Ageing: Peer education

Peer education has long been an important strategy for COTA in informing older people on matters of importance. Our *Quality Use of Medicines* and *Beyond Maturity Blues* sessions are very well received.

In the past, volunteer speakers have assisted in the promotion of LLLS™, but we now want to broaden that role to promoting greater participation in all types of physical activity, and to increase awareness of the benefits of regular physical activity and of existing opportunities.

Older people are more likely to identify with other older people and the messages they deliver. For this reason, we are seeking your assistance in recruiting LLLS™ participants who could promote physical activity and LLLS™ in particular, both locally, and if possible in other areas. COTA will provide training and resources.

If you have someone in your program who might be suitable—enthusiastic, a good speaker, confident and prepared to give it a go, please encourage them to contact either Stephanie or Mitsuko (see above for contact details). See Page 3 for details regarding training.



Above: LLLS™ participants from Croydon Leisure and instructor Anne-Marie Negri working out

Volunteer training for 2008

All new peer educators need to complete our volunteer training and must contact Mitsuko to book their place.

The details for the first block of volunteer training are as follows:

- ▶ General COTA Vic Orientation: Monday 21 January & Monday 4 February 2008 (inclusive), 10.00 am - 3.30 pm at COTA Vic. *Potential volunteers should attend both sessions.*
- ▶ Physical activity specific training: Tuesday 12 February 2008, 10.00 am - 3.30 pm at Ross House, Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

Morning tea and lunch are provided.

Keen-Agers: An outstanding way to promote physical activity

You are never too old to enjoy being active—that's the message from *Keen-Agers*, a project that has put a whole new spin on table tennis.

And recently *Keen-Agers'* contribution to increasing physical activity in older people was recognised by VicHealth with an outstanding achievement award. ***Keen-Agers - Increasing Physical Activity Amongst Senior Victorians*** was successful in the category for projects with budgets under \$75,000. The award was presented to COTA Vic Executive Director, Sue Hendy and founder of *Keen-Agers*, John Gale at VicHealth's Awards Night on 12 December 2007, before an audience of 750 people.

"*Keen-Agers* has made a significant difference to the lives of older people across Victoria", said Sue Hendy. "It provides an opportunity for people to participate in a healthy activity in a social, non-competitive environment."

According to VicHealth CEO Todd Harper "This year's awards for outstanding achievement in health promotion highlight the innovative and inspirational work being undertaken by VicHealth's partners around the State".

John Gale started the first *Keen-Agers* club in Bairnsdale in 2001. COTA was funded by VicHealth to work with *Keen-Agers* to expand the model across Victoria and evaluate its impact. There are now over 20 *Keen-Agers* clubs with more than 500 regular players.

For more information about *Keen-Agers* see www.keenagers.org.au.



L.I.F.E. Lines:

**News from Leaders in Fitness
Education for older adults**

L.I.F.E. (Leaders in Fitness Education) for older adults now comes under COTA's umbrella.

L.I.F.E. leaders are fitness and physical activity professionals, often older people themselves, who are qualified to lead group exercise classes for older people. They have completed Certificate III (or IV) in Fitness, and a special qualification to work with older adults.

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Typically classes are offered in local neighbourhood facilities such as community centres, church halls, retirement villages or fitness centres. The emphasis is on fun, safe and friendly classes suitable for all abilities and fitness levels. Classes include chair-based exercise, mind-body work such as yoga, Pilates as well as floor work, hand weights, balance and stretching.

Membership of the L.I.F.E Special Interest Group is open to fitness and physical activity professionals and people and organisations with an interest in physical activity for older adults

The L.I.F.E. Special Interest Group:

- ▶ Provides access to up-to-date information and research
- ▶ Promotes sharing of ideas and experiences
- ▶ Offers community education sessions, demonstrations and participation in community events
- ▶ Promotes classes delivered by L.I.F.E. leaders
- ▶ Advocates on physical activity issues relating to older adults
- ▶ Establishes relationships with key organisations.

For more information contact Robyn Alexander (see Page 2 for contact details).

Healthy Older Participants: COTA Vic's Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation (PICSAR) project

COTA Vic is one of about 60 organisations funded through the VicHealth (Victoria's Health Promotion Foundation) PICSAR program to increase participation by older people in physical activity.

Many older people already participate in lawn bowls, golf, swimming and walking—activities often perceived as 'age-appropriate'. COTA Vic aims to work with older people and relevant sport and recreation organisations to facilitate the development of a broader range of opportunities for older people, and to encourage them to take up these opportunities.

COTA Vic's *Healthy Older Participants (HOP)* project aims to increase involvement by older people in all aspects of sport and active recreation—this includes leadership, coaching, officiating, administration and governance, as well as direct participation.

Initially, COTA Vic will work in partnership with Leisure Networks in the City of Greater Geelong to:

- ▶ Increase awareness of older people of the benefits of physical activity by developing a peer education program. Volunteers will be trained to present to groups of older people and appropriate resources developed to support their work.
- ▶ Work with community sport and active recreation organisations to develop physical activity opportunities for people over 50 years of age, based on best practice models, success factors identified in sporting and health promotion literature and feedback from older people themselves.

For more information contact Robyn Alexander (see Page 2 for contact details).

Web site profile: BHF 30-a-day Campaign

In 2007 the British Heart Foundation (BHF) launched the 30-a-day campaign to encourage older adults to get active to safeguard their heart health.

As part of the 30-a-day campaign, the BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health has created an *Active for Later Life* Toolkit to help all those involved in developing physical activity programmes for older people of all ages and abilities.

You can download the British Heart Foundation's *Active for Later Life* Toolkit from their website (see link below) and checkout their eye-catching campaign posters (or search under "30 a Day")!

www.bhf.org.uk/news_and_campaigning/our_campaigns/30_a_day_campaign/active_for_later_life_toolkit.aspx

Research update: Physical activity recommendations for older people from the ACSM and AHA

Reference:

NELSON, M. E., W. J. REJESKI, S. N. BLAIR, P. W. DUNCAN, J. O. JUDGE, A. C. KING, C. A. MACERA, and C. CASTANEDASCEPPA. Physical Activity and Public Health in Older Adults: Recommendation from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. *Med. Sci. Sports Exerc.*, Vol. 39, No. 8, pp. 1435–1445, 2007.

During 2007, the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association released their latest recommendations for the types and amounts of physical activity to improve and maintain the health of older people. A summary follows but you can access a pdf of the full article at:

<http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/reprint/CIRCULATIONAHA.107.185650>

Recommendations are similar to those for adults, but with some key differences, including:

- ▶ Consideration of aerobic fitness in determining the appropriate intensity
- ▶ Inclusion of activities to maintain or increase flexibility
- ▶ Inclusion of balance exercises for older adults at risk of falls
- ▶ Development of an activity plan that integrates preventive and therapeutic recommendations.

The expert panel recommended promotion of:

Aerobic activity: In addition to routine activities of daily living, including casual walking, a minimum of 30 minutes moderate intensity activity five days/week or vigorous intensity activity 20 minutes three days/week or a combination of the two. However:

- ▶ Given higher injury risk, lower compliance, loss of fitness, chronic conditions associated with age, and likelihood of functional limitations less emphasis on vigorous and/or high levels of activity may be appropriate
- ▶ Given variable fitness levels, it may be necessary for older people to exercise under supervision for a period to learn to identify an appropriate level of effort.

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Muscle strengthening activity: This is particularly important to prevent loss of muscle mass and bone, and for functional benefits. Eight–10 exercises on two non-consecutive days per week using the major muscle groups and using resistance that allows 10–15 repetitions for each exercise are recommended. Flexibility and balance exercises should also be incorporated.

Reducing sedentary behaviour: Given the ‘dose-response relationship’ between physical activity and health benefits, some activity is better than none.

Risk management: Activity-related musculo-skeletal injuries are considered a barrier and the panel considered that there was insufficient evidence on effective strategies to prevent injury, with current practice relying on clinical experience, expert opinion and legal liability issues.

The panel also recommended a gradual, stepwise increase in physical activity over time, and integration of individual approaches with community interventions to increase access to appropriate information and facilities.

About COTA Vic

Our mission is to mobilise older people and those who work with them to age well in a just society.

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Visit COTA Vic’s website for more
www.cotavic.org.au

Next edition of *On the Move*

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Please contact us if you have anything to contribute

Closing date for next edition: Friday 7 March