

On the Move

The Newsletter of COTA's Physical Activity Unit

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Important dates for your 2008 diary

- Sunday 5 – Sunday 12 October: Victorian Seniors Festival (see p2 below)

Living Longer Living Stronger™ (LLLS™) Update

2008 LLLS™ Conference: Lifting the bar: Living Longer Living Stronger into the future

About 170 people, from both current and prospective partner organisations, attended the LLLS™ conference, conducted on Tuesday 22 July. It was pleasing to see such a high level of interest from new partners and organisations not yet involved in LLLS™ and we look forward to welcoming them on board.

Don Nardella MLA, Member for Melton, opened the conference on behalf of the Victorian Government Minister for Senior Victorians, Lisa Neville.

The morning program focussed on general issues. Dr Ralph 'I am a convert' Audehm provided some valuable advice on how program coordinators and instructors can encourage health professionals, especially GPs, to refer to LLLS™, Freda Vrandtsidis presented preliminary findings from the National Ageing Research Institute's (NARI) study on LLLS™, and Scott Way provoked and challenged the audience to consider more critically just how well they cater for the needs of older people.

The afternoon concurrent sessions addressed more specific partner interests. Topics for the panel sessions, *Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups* and *Promoting transition for LLLS™ participants from community health centre-based programs to fitness centres*, were chosen on the basis of feedback from our partners. The background provided by the three panellists stimulated interest and questions from participants – many thanks to Heather Chapman, Liz Womersley and Karen and Paul Roten for their valuable insights.

These sessions reinforced one of Scott's Way's key messages, specifically how essential it is to recognise and understand individual needs, and ensure that people feel comfortable and supported. It seems obvious, but it is easily overlooked.

Another key point to emerge was that in attempting to better cater for CALD groups, we tend to focus on language as a barrier (and hence on translating printed material). In so doing, we often underestimate (or ignore) the importance of cultural beliefs and practices, and also the most effective methods of communicating with each group. Again, the importance of making the effort to better understand the people you are trying to reach with your programs was a clear message.

Other concurrent sessions addressed nutrition, progressive programming for strength training, use of local media in promotion and the new state-government diabetes prevention program, *Life*, as a referral opportunity. These sessions all provided valuable information for participants to support the delivery of their programs and COTA is extremely grateful to all our presenters. All conference presentations are available to be downloaded from our website.

Thanks to the COTA team, especially Mitsuko Penberthy who, ably supported by Robyn Alexander, kept things running smoothly all day (not to mention during the period leading up to the conference). Special thanks also to Board Member Anne O'Shaughnessy who stepped in at the last minute as a very efficient chair, and to our two enthusiastic and versatile volunteers, Martin Clancy and Jackie Young who turned their hands to everything from photocopying to facilitation concurrent sessions.

LLLS™ Advisory Committee

The LLLS Advisory Committee has been established and will conduct its first meeting on Tuesday 12 August.

The initial objectives of the advisory committee are to:

- Assist COTA in keeping abreast of factors in the broader environment that may have an impact on LLLS™ and in responding to those factors as necessary
- Bring to COTA's attention issues that have emerged in the delivery of LLLS™
- Provide advice in regard to strategies to address issues and concerns
- Provide advice in regard to future options and priorities for LLLS™.

It is anticipated that Terms of Reference will be developed as an outcome of the first meeting. Part of this will be a process by means of which partners and other key stakeholders, including participants, can have input into the issues considered by the committee.

We will keep you informed regarding the activities of the Advisory Committee via this newsletter, but I would like this to be a two-way process – please let us know about issues and concerns from your perspective in delivering LLLS.

Victorian Seniors Festival

As mentioned in the previous edition of *On the Move*, the Victorian Seniors Festival runs for eight days from Sunday 5 – Sunday 12 October 2008. The Festival is organized by the Victorian Government Office of Senior Victorians (OSV) and offers a range of activities and events across Victoria.

The Seniors Festival is a great opportunity for you to tap into the statewide media coverage and promote the programs and activities you offer for older people.

Here are some from us as a starting point:

- Demonstrations involving participants in your Living Longer Living Stronger™ program either on-site (as a way of cross-promoting the program to other older adult users of your facility) or elsewhere, such as a local shopping centre or other local gathering point (as a means of promoting your program to a new audience of potential participants)

- A panel discussion session, involving LLLS™ participants, and older adults who participate in other activities at your facility to talk about how they became involved, what they get out of it and what barriers they had to overcome.

However, I'm sure you can be much more creative – I also recommend that you seek suggestions from your older adult participants about what might appeal to them (and more particularly their less active friends and/or family).

Start planning now - contact your local council to find out what is planned in your area and how you can have your activities listed in their calendar of events. If you are looking for more ideas try the International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) website <http://www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm>.

If you would like to stock up on LLLS™ promotional material – specifically brochures and posters – for the Seniors Festival, please give us ample notice (at least four weeks).

See the OSV website for more details about the Victorian Seniors Festival:

<http://www.seniors.vic.gov.au/web19/osv/dvcosv.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/victorian+seniors+festival+2008>

Moving More: COTA's Peer Education Program

Peer educator session feedback

We have had some great feedback from participants at *Moving More* sessions conducted by our peer educators. Nearly all participants who have completed evaluation forms to date indicated that they:

- Found the information relevant
- Felt more confident about increasing their physical activity
- Were more motivated to become more active
- Were more likely to consider strength training.

These sessions can be a great way to promote your program, especially if you can recruit a local educator, who knows your program and your facility well. Please contact Mitsuko if you would like to book a session, but make sure you give us at least two weeks notice.

Training

We are still looking to recruit more educators, particularly in the Geelong area, where we would like to run a training course – a minimum of five people would be required.

Please encourage anyone who may be interested to contact Mitsuko (9655 2108 or enquire@cotavic.org.au) or Stephanie (9655 2105 or activemanager@cotavic.org.au).

Healthy Older Participants: An update

As the VicHealth Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation (PICSAR) Program enters its second year, COTA's *Healthy Older Participants* (HOP!) project is ready to initiate a significant new phase, to pilot an 'age-friendly' model of sport with local sport clubs.

The proposed model is designed around central 'age-friendly' principles that include:

- a focus on non-competitive participation, providing a fun, positive, enjoyable experience
- emphasis on social interaction, encouraging a sense of camaraderie
- a less structured approach to play, minimal rules and regulations
- self-administration (members run their group).

Essentially the *Seniors Social Sport group* model involves an existing sport club establishing a 'seniors' section that provides social/recreational sessions for an identifiable group of older players.

The *Seniors Social Sport group* model is a preliminary model based on previous work done by COTA in establishing recreational table tennis groups for older players (Keen-Agers) and also our strength-training endorsement scheme (Living Longer Living Stronger™) for older participants. It also draws upon a wide range of current evidence, literature and research around older people's participation in physical activity to address the recognised barriers and motivators for participation.

For more information contact Robyn Alexander, Physical Activity Unit, COTA Victoria on 9655 2113 or physicalactivity@cotavic.org.au

Resources

Sport and the ageing population: Do older people have a place in driving up participation in sport?

Sport England, the strategic lead for sport in England, is serious about substantially increasing the nation's sport participation levels with an ambition to get two million people more active in sport by 2012.

In the report ***Sport and the ageing population: Do older people have a place in driving up participation in sport?***, Jonathan Long from the Centre for Leisure and Sport Research, Leeds Metropolitan University, argues for the issue of older people in sport to be taken more seriously. The entire article is certainly worth a read. Some of the more interesting points and challenges he raises are presented in this extract:

A New Old Age?

... the experience of people's later years is changing. Typically this new old age is presented as being characterised by greater life expectancy (and therefore more years in retirement), better health and greater affluence. Certainly the image of old age has shifted, though ageism seems unabated. What would be deemed prejudicial actions and beliefs if directed towards women and minority ethnic groups pass without comment when denigrating older people. The perception of a healthier old age warrants qualified support. Not only do people live to older ages, but also for the most part holding age constant does suggest there is better health.

... today's older generation are ... less likely to be accepting of what others deem appropriate behaviour for older people, and may indeed be prepared to grow old disgracefully (Hen Co-op, 1993).

... it is inappropriate to treat all those over 65, never mind over 50 as a single demographic group. It is vital that the mass is differentiated and Sport England identifies different strategies for the many different kinds of people being lumped together. Unfortunately, even the process of differentiating the old on the basis of chronological age is fraught with difficulties.

So what are these older people doing in terms of sport and physical activity? There are no great surprises in what the General Household Survey (UK) reveals about activities engaged in at least once in the previous 4 weeks. The overall pattern remains one of declining participation with age; the only activity to go against this trend is bowls with highest participation levels in the 60-69 age group.

The most popular activities with older men and women

Men 60-69 yrs	Women 60-69 yrs	Men 70+ yrs	Women 70+ yrs
Walking	Walking	Walking	Walking
Snooker/billiards/pool	Keep-fit/yoga/dance	Cycling	Keep-fit/yoga/dance
Cycling	Swimming	Snooker...	Swimming
Swimming	Cycling	Bowls	Bowls
Golf	Bowls	Swimming	Cycling
Bowls	Golf	Keep-fit/yoga/dance	Golf

Source: General Household Survey, 1996

(Australian data, from Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey 2006 Annual Report, Australian Sports Commission, demonstrates similar results for adults 65 years +: Walking (other), Aerobics/fitness, Golf, Lawn Bowls, Swimming, and Tennis. Long raises the question of whether these therefore represent 'age appropriate' activities that should be the focus of provision. COTA and VicHealth believe (as does Long) that doing so confines older people to stereotypical participation).

Sport England cannot expect to have a single unitary strategy for increasing participation among older people (no one size fits all).

"...just because the leisure patterns of older people are currently perceived to be characterised by bingo, bowls and tea dances, does not mean that, even if such images were true, future patterns should necessarily remain the same."

The experience that older people have had of sport when younger may be very different from what sport can offer now; they may have little knowledge of the range of enjoyable activities available.

Plenty of people in retirement might well be interested in playing football if given the opportunity. It may be that opportunity has to be separate from fast, fit, highly skilled players, but such separation need not be on the basis of age – 'yoga for people who are stiff', 'walking football', 'social tennis', 'light weight circuits'. Different entry levels are important for people who may lack confidence in their own ability.

Excerpt from: Long, J. (2004) *Sport and the ageing population: Do older people have a place in driving up participation in sport?* Leeds: Centre for Leisure and sport research. Leeds Metropolitan University

Available from the Sport Development website:

www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/dupageing.html

sportdevelopment.org.uk is a collection of resources for students about sports development in the United Kingdom. The heart of the site is the document library where you can download 100's of sports development documents both past and present spanning 45 years.

Resources for older adults

Choose Health: Be Active: A physical activity guide for older Australians

Research indicates that most older people are aware of, and recognise the value of physical activity, however they are looking for more concrete information on how to translate the general physical activity messages to suit themselves and their own circumstances. They also want guidance on suitable activities and direction to specific activities that could help get them started.

Choose Health: Be Active is a neat little booklet that does just that.

The booklet starts with an encouraging reminder of the benefits of physical activity. It then covers some common physical activity information – specifically tailored for older people, such as a brief explanation of the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines (You know, "everyone should try to do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week"), as well as an outline of the four types of activity – fitness, strength, flexibility and balance – needed to keep healthy, plus a small section on nutrition. The booklet also has a section on strength and balance exercises that can be integrated into everyday living.

I like the practical approach it takes, inviting readers to challenge some of their excuses for not being more active, along with some encouragement and simple strategies to enable them be more active. Support strategies such as thinking about your goals, keeping track of your progress, finding ways to overcome possible obstacles as well as offering practical advice on coping with health problems.

This booklet shows simple and helpful ways to build exercise and activity into everyday life to help older Australians achieve sufficient physical activity for good health.

Choose Health: Be Active was jointly developed by the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Health and Ageing in association with Sports Medicine Australia (2005).

To order copies of this booklet call the Department of Health and Ageing through the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853 (general community) or the Department of Veterans' Affairs on 133 254 (veteran community members and veteran service providers).

It is available for download (PDF) from the Department of Veterans' Affairs website: www.dva.gov.au/media/publicat/2005/choose_health/index.htm

Robyn Alexander, Physical Activity Officer, COTA

Web site profile: IDEA Health and Fitness www.ideafit.com

This is (another) American 'member's' site (cost of membership is around US\$89 for Group/Health Professional to US\$109 for Personal Trainers), but there is an archive of exercise-related articles that non-members can access by scrolling down to the bottom of the home page. Non-members can also access free consumer information in the Fitness Resources/IDEA's Fitness Articles.

Thanks (again) to Janet Hesson from L.I.F.E. for letting us know about this site.

Research update: Deakin University in Melbourne investigating muscle growth and protein supplementation in older males

As we all know, the Australian population is ageing. Twelve percent of the population are currently aged 65 and over, but within 35 years approximately 22% of the population will be in this age group [1]. A significant health risk associated with ageing is the loss of muscle (or sarcopenia), which affects almost half of those aged 65 and above [1]. Loss of muscle size and strength with advancing age are due both to changing lifestyle (declining food consumption and less exercise) as well as a reduced ability for muscles to re-grow with exercise training or after injury [2]. However, the reasons that muscle growth and repair are diminished with advancing age are not thoroughly understood.

Many of the detrimental effects of age on the human body are caused by the accumulated effects of free-radicals. A number of factors increase free-radical generation in older individuals including a generalised low-grade inflammation [3, 4], which affects many tissues in the body, apparently including skeletal muscle cells. Low-grade inflammation activates cellular stress signalling pathways. Increased activation of these stress signalling pathways, and the proteins that are produced are central to muscle wasting in advanced age [4].

It is paradoxical that exercise, particularly high intensity strength exercise, which generates free-radicals [6], is the most effective therapy for the maintenance of muscle mass and for the restoration of muscle mass after a period of immobility [1]. Following strength exercise, muscular free-radical production, pro-inflammatory hormones and stress signalling pathways are all activated [6, 7]. Thus, it is not yet known how muscular stress induced by exercise is beneficial for increasing muscle mass when many of the pathways involved in muscle loss are also activated.

Research at Deakin University has recently demonstrated that many aspects of the inflammatory response in younger males, following a single bout of exercise, are markedly attenuated with the ingestion of a dairy protein supplement consumed immediately after the exercise bout. Indeed, the evidence that protein supplementation has a beneficial impact on muscular strength gains and soreness after exercise is accumulating. Yet whether this is also true in older individuals has not been investigated.

The School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences at Deakin University, Burwood, Melbourne is currently conducting a study that will aim to determine why muscle growth is diminished following resistance exercise in older individuals and whether dairy protein supplementation can improve muscle growth. They are looking for healthy males, aged 60-75 years with who are not currently involved in a resistance-training program. The subjects, following medical screening, will undertake a standardised and supervised single bout of leg strength exercise. The subjects will be randomly assigned placebo (flavoured water), dairy protein or carbohydrate supplements. Blood and muscle samples (muscle biopsy) will be taken before and after the exercise bout.

If you, or someone you know, would like more information or are interested in participating in this study, please contact Dr Aaron Petersen, ph 9251 7177 or email apeter@deakin.edu.au

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This is the edited version of an article provided by Dr Aaron Petersen. Publication of this article in *On the Move* in no way implies endorsement by COTA of this research.

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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Please contact us if you have anything to contribute

Closing date for next edition: Friday 19 September