

RESEARCH SUMMARY

IMPACT OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ON THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ACTIVE AUSTRALIAN OLDER ADULTS



PROF ROCHELLE EIME, DR JACK HARVEY,
MELANIE CHARITY, DR SAM ELLIOTT,
PROF MURRAY DRUMMOND,
DR AURELIE PANKOWIAK,
PROF HANS WESTERBEEK

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Compared to pre-COVID-19, during lockdown restrictions, older women were more likely to report poorer physical and mental health than men.

Background

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, opportunities to participate in sport and group-based physical activity were very limited or cancelled all together across many communities in Australia.

Aim

To investigate the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on active older adults' (+ 60 years) perceived health and wellbeing, and how health and wellbeing differ based participation settings in sport and physical activity (i.e. club-based vs informal; group-based vs individual physical activity).

Methods

A survey was distributed by national and state sporting organizations during the first COVID-19 lockdown in Australia May-June 2020. The survey collected information about participant demographics, sport and physical activity patterns and health and wellbeing outcomes during COVID-19 compared to pre-COVID-19.

Key results and discussion

Older adults participating in sport and physical activities in a range of settings and modes had better health and wellbeing than older adults participating in a single mode or setting.

Perhaps those who were more active pre-COVID-19 had greater motivation and/or support to continue being active during lockdown.

Social support is very important for older adults to become and remain physically active. Further, social support impacts the health and wellbeing of active older adults.

Community sport and physical activity for older adults should focus on social support to maximise participation and health outcomes.

HEALTH OF ACTIVE OLDER ADULTS DURING COVID-19 (2020) COMPARED TO THE YEAR BEFORE (PRE-COVID-19)

Older adults who participated in a range of settings (both club/informal sport and physical activity) had better general & physical health than those solely participating in one setting.

60% reported their general, physical, and mental health during lockdown was the same the year before (pre-COVID-19).



Contact: Professor Rochelle Eime
r.eime@federation.edu.au
pasiglobal.com