

Multicentre cluster randomised trial comparing a community group exercise programme and home-based exercise with usual care for people aged 65 years and over in primary care

Steve Iliffe,^{1*} Denise Kendrick,² Richard Morris,¹
Tahir Masud,³ Heather Gage,⁴ Dawn Skelton,⁵
Susie Dinan,¹ Ann Bowling,⁶ Mark Griffin,¹
Deborah Haworth,¹ Glen Swanwick,²
Hannah Carpenter,² Arun Kumar,² Zoe Stevens,¹
Sheena Gawler,¹ Cate Barlow,¹ Juliette Cook²
and Carolyn Belcher²

¹Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health, University College London, London, UK

²Division of Primary Care, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

³Clinical Gerontology Research Unit, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Nottingham, UK

⁴Department of Economics, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK

⁵School of Health and Life Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK

⁶Health Sciences, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK

*Corresponding author

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Plain English summary

The ProAct65+ study

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Plain English summary

Physical activity (PA) in later life can improve physical and mental health and quality of life, yet many older adults are inactive.

The ProAct65+ trial tested two methods of promoting PA with older people, one with weekly classes and the other with home exercises, both for 24 weeks. The aim of the study was to examine if the two exercise programmes were effective in increasing levels of PA 12 months after each programme ended.

We invited people aged ≥ 65 years from 43 general practices to take part in the study, and 1256 did so. Practices were randomly allocated to have class exercises, home exercise or usual care (with no special exercise plan). We measured different aspects of health and well-being. The aim was to increase the proportion of participants who reached or exceeded 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous PA.

Participants were followed up for 12 months after the exercise intervention ended. Significantly more of those participants in the exercise classes than in the usual-care group reached the target for PA at the 12-month follow-up. Those who had home exercise alone were no more likely to reach the PA target compared with the usual-care group. At follow-up the exercise class group had significantly fewer falls than the usual-care group, but there was no significant difference for the exercise at home group. Participants in the exercise class arm were more likely to be positive about exercise at follow-up. There were no other changes in health and well-being.

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Editorial contact: nihredit@southampton.ac.uk

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