

Visually Impaired OLder people's Exercise programme for falls prevenTion (VIOLET): a feasibility study

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Plain English summary

The VIOLET feasibility study

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Plain English summary

The VIOLET study took an exercise class that was designed to help avoid falls and reduce fear of falling and adapted it so that it could be offered to older people with eyesight difficulties.

We took guidance from older people with eyesight difficulties. This helped to plan a pilot study in which one group of older people with eyesight difficulties did 12 weekly 1-hour exercise classes and another group carried on with normal life. We collected information from both groups at three separate time points. The information included measurements about fear of falling, activity, loneliness, depression and thoughts about health and the future. Some people also talked for longer about taking part in the exercise classes and the investigation.

A total of 33 people took part in the exercise classes and 31 continued with normal life. Information at all three time points was collected from almost all people. Those doing the exercise classes were also asked to practise the exercises at home for 2 hours per week. The total amount of practice varied, with most people doing less than 1 hour (median 50 minutes) per week.

Most people had a low or moderate level of concern over falling, which did not change. There was little change in the levels of activity, depression, loneliness or thoughts about health and the future. The people with eyesight difficulties who participated liked feeling useful and meeting other people but felt it would be better if more information was given about how the exercises helped. They, and those who delivered the exercise class, thought that another person should give support, and that the class could be made more challenging. It proved possible to change the exercise classes, although it was felt that those with eyesight difficulties could go to classes already offered. We learned lessons about ways of recruiting more people and identifying those with a greater falls risk who might benefit in the future.

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