EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVANCED STAY STRONG STAY HEALTHY IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS

Emily M. Crowe

Dr. Steve Ball, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Introduction. The Advanced Stay Strong, Stay Healthy (ASSSH) program was developed by a team of MU Extension Specialists to meet the increasing need for a follow-up program to the Stay Strong Stay Healthy (SSSH) program. The goal of the program is to build on the fitness base acquired from SSSH by adding new and more complex exercises and is designed to challenge older adults in new and different ways and to improve activities of daily living (ADL’s). Loss of muscular strength, flexibility, and balance are strong predictors of falls in the elderly. Purpose. To investigate the effectiveness of the MU Extension program Advanced Stay Strong, Stay Healthy. It was hypothesized that the program can improve physical parameters of health including strength, balance, and flexibility which indicate the risk of falling among seniors. Methods. Twenty eight older adults volunteer for this study. Matched pairs t-tests were used to compare differences in measures of the physical indicators of strength, flexibility, and balance. Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the exercise adherence and age effects on the increments in measures of the physical indicators of strength from pre to post. Dual X-Ray absorptiometry (DXA) scans were conducted to identify changes in body composition. Results. Following a 10-week structured strength program, participants significantly improved strength, flexibility, and balance (p<0.05). Subjects showed a significant decrease in % body fat. Conclusion. The community-based MU Extension program ASSSH can significantly improve muscular strength, flexibility, balance and, ultimately, reduce risk factors of falling among seniors.