The Strength in Old Age Programme promotes active ageing

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Elina Karvinen, Heli Starck, Pirjo Kalmari, Minna Säpyskä-Nordberg, Ulla Salminen
Age Institute
**Finland - one of the fastest aging countries in Europe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of 65-year-olds</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>27 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share of 75-year-olds</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>17 %</td>
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**Source:** Statistics Finland 2009.
Why?

• Problems of mobility recognized as an important reason for care
  – Second most important reason for home care or institutionalization
  – Central cause for increased risk of falls

• Strength and balance exercise is a key factor for mobility
  - Diverse exercise is the most efficient way of decreasing falls among independently living older adults (Gillespie et al. 2009, Karinkanta et al. 2010)
  - Older adults, who exercise in spite of mobility problems, need less outside help (Hirvensalo 2002)

• Guided exercise groups have not existed for persons with decreased mobility
Strength in Old Age Programme

Main objective

Produce research-based strength and balance exercise for independently living 75+ older adults with decreased mobility, and promote their participation in the activities.

*The Age Institute: coordinator, mentor*

Stages 2003-2014

- **Pilot** 2003-2005
- **Stage 1** 2005-2009
- **Stage 2** 2010-2014

Aim

Support the mobility, independent living and quality of life of older adults

*Ikäinstituutti*
Pilot project (2003-2005)

- Training programme - Instructor network

Instructor training 42 h
For professionals in exercise and rehabilitation
- Strength and balance training
  - Prevention of falls
  - Outdoor exercise

- Local experts and local experiments in 8 municipalities

Results

- 500 strength and balance instructors around Finland
- 4,050 trained group leaders

Ikäinstituutti
Stage I (2005-2009)

Aim to produce

- **Good practices** in the organization of exercise activities
- **The mentoring model** for health exercise organizers
  - The Age Institute
- **Project network**: learning and sharing together, peer support

35 local three-year projects: social and health care associations
Results: Action

- **1,000 new permanent strength and balance groups** for older people with decreased functional capacity

- **10,000 older adults with mobility problems have joined strength and balance exercise groups**

  ’When I start the day with gymnastics I get more things done and I feel better’

  ’I feel like my memory has improved’

Accumulation of strength and balance 2005-2009 (n=3659)

Ikäinstituutti
Results: Good practices

1. Reaching the right target group
2. Successful exercise counselling
3. Valid evaluation of mobility
4. Successful strength and balance exercise
5. Facilities, equipment, transportation, routes
6. Recruiting and training instructors
7. Inclusion of older adults
Results: The Mentoring Model

- Support in development plans and evaluation
- Personal guidance
- Diverse training programme
- Communication materials
- Forums for cooperation
- Project networks
- Media visibility
- Learning together
Stage II (2009-2014)

Aim to implement and disseminate good practices through mentoring, instructor network and project network

- 30 municipalities + all Finland
- The production of exercise services in cooperation between
  - various municipal authorities
  - NGOs
  - volunteers
Conclusions

• It is a **slow learning process** on many levels to make research knowledge into good practices
• The dissemination of a good practice requires a **careful description** of the practice and process
• A **multiprofessional network** of experts efficiently promotes the **dissemination** of good practices
• **Mentoring** is a great way to implement good practices
Thank you for your attention!