EFFECTIVENESS OF MOTOR SKILL OF WALKING GROUP EXERCISE IN OLDER ADULTS: A CLUSTER RANDOMIZED TRIAL

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ABSTRACT

Many standard group exercise programs emphasize muscle strengthening, flexibility and general conditioning because of the association of such impairments with walking difficulties, but do not emphasize the ability to walk or the timing and coordination of movement that is critical to walking. We developed a group exercise program that includes timing and coordination exercises for walking called On the Move (OTM). In a single blind cluster-randomized trial, we evaluated the effectiveness of OTM and standard group programs to improve mobility, function and disability in 32 independent living facilities, community centers and senior apartment buildings. Exploratory subgroup analyses suggest those with better mobility at baseline (gait speed > 0.8 m/s and 6-minute distance farther than 300m) may elicit greater benefits from OTM than the standard program. A group exercise program that addresses the motor skill of walking is more effective than a standard strength and conditioning program in improving mobility.

ABOUT DR. BRACH

Jennifer S. Brach is an associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy. Her areas of interest include community-based participatory research, aging, gait, exercise, physical activity and physical function. She is responsible for teaching research methods in physical therapy course in the DPT program and the Methods of Inquiry course in the PhD program.