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Social design as a lever for engagement and sustainability of physical activity among older people

Angèle Palermo, Aurélie Goncalves, Maxime Deshayes, Béatrice Gisclard

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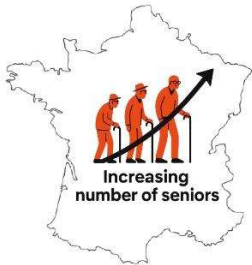


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Social design as a lever for engagement and sustainability of physical activity among older people

SPRING DAY – International meeting between PhD Students on the 28th of April 2025 – Pr.e.s.Age

INTRODUCTION



The **proportion of people aged 65 and over** in the French population continues to rise, a phenomenon that will intensify over the coming decades (Algava and Blanpain, 2021). This **demographic shift** poses new challenges for **public health**, particularly in terms of **chronic disease prevention** and improving seniors' **quality of life** (Raymondeau, 2023). Regular physical activity plays an essential role in maintaining seniors' health, by reducing the **risk of chronic diseases**. It also helps improve mental and social well-being, promoting an independent and active life throughout the aging process (Strain et al., 2024).

In response to this observation, **adapted physical activity programs** have been implemented in France for several years, notably for older adults. Despite promising short-term results, two challenges persist: **adherence** and **sustainability** (Madigan et al., 2024). Nevertheless, these two factors are essential to maximize the effects of physical activity on health but depends on factors such as motivation, accessibility and **the adaptation of programs to each individual**.

Social design offers a solution to these challenges. It enables physical activity programs to be **co-created** with the direct involvement of senior citizens, responding to their needs and guaranteeing lasting adherence. Social design involves designing solutions in **collaboration with users**, taking into account their experiences and expectations to create effective, tailored interventions (Watkin et al., 2021).

In this study, we will aim to **implement social design methodologies** in our **physical activity programs** for an older population in order to evaluate their effects.



OBJECTIVES

1. **Co-designing an adapted physical activity program** with older people using social design
2. **Evaluating the effectiveness of social design** on the **long-term sustainability** of post-program physical activity
3. **Developing a theoretical and methodological framework** for applying social design to adapted physical activity programs



HYPOTHETICAL RESULTS

H1: the program designed with users has a better take-up rate, with participants starting and completing the program in full, compared with the control group, which has lower take-up rates.

H2: the program designed with users achieves better sustainability of the practice following the program, with participants adopting an active lifestyle and maintaining an activity, whereas participants in the control group achieve poor sustainability results (+ 6 months, +1 year).

H3: the health benefits for participants in the intervention group were greater than those obtained in the control group

METHODE

Mixed methods :
quantitative and
Qualitative

(Guével & Pommier, 2012)

APPROACH



PERSPECTIVES

The results of this research could open new avenues for **integrating social design into large-scale interventions** promoting physical activity among seniors. These approaches could be adapted to **other populations and contexts**, contributing to public health and **chronic disease prevention**. Ongoing evaluation of social design's impact on behavior sustainability is essential for refining strategies and ensuring long-term effectiveness. This co-construction approach, **empowering users** to take control of the interventions they benefit from, shows promise in **promoting physical activity**. Given the challenge of evaluating promotional actions often disconnected from population expectations, we aim to apply our initial investigations to **support these campaigns**.



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