

# What are the barriers that influence the engagement of older, rural men in group physical activity programs that support healthy ageing?

## Abstract

### Objective:

The purpose of this study was to identify the barriers that were preventing older men from attending age appropriate, affordable, and easily accessible exercise classes in their community.

Findings identified five key barriers that contribute to preventing men from attending these classes: body image, masculinity, instructors, lack of information and women. Understanding these barriers has resulted in seven recommendations such as running men only classes and providing clear information about what to expect, that if implemented could potentially increase male participation at Physical Activity Leader Network (PALN) programs.

### Methods:

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 men aged 55 and over who were not attending these exercise classes. Interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim and data was analysed thematically.

### Results:

Findings identified five key barriers that contribute to preventing men from attending these classes: body image, masculinity, instructors, lack of information and women.

### Conclusion:

Understanding these barriers has resulted in seven recommendations such as running men only classes and providing clear information about what to expect, that if implemented could potentially increase male participation at PALN programs.

### Keywords:

older men, rural, physical activity, exercise



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Adelle is a Healthy Ageing Health Promotion Officer. As a 2020 RRCBP candidate, she completed a qualitative study to identify the barriers that were impacting the low engagement of men into the MLHD exercise program for older adults. As an occupational therapist with a background in Health Promotion, the importance of physical activity for older adults and how it contributes to their ability to continue living in their own homes is a priority for her.