



Using the Media to Reach People With Arthritis: *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever Campaign*

Public Health Problem

Arthritis is one of the most common health problems in the United States, with 49 million adults having doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001—nearly 1 of every 4 adults. An additional 21 million Americans reported chronic joint symptoms. In Oregon, 567,000 adults had doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001, and an additional 365,000 reported chronic joint symptoms.

Program Example

The Arthritis Program of the Oregon Department of Human Services pilot-tested the CDC-developed health communications campaign, *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever*, in Bend, Oregon (population 52,000). About 39% of adults in Bend have arthritis. The campaign used broadcast and print media: 258 radio spots were run; 2,300 brochures were mailed to Medicare enrollees of the local health plan; and 3,900 brochures were mailed to Medicaid enrollees. In addition, articles about arthritis and People With Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE®) were published in the health system newsletter. Two newspapers and one bulletin used the drop-in articles, resulting in nearly 40,000 print media impressions. Finally, a local morning TV talk show featured an interview with the Arthritis Program's manager, who discussed arthritis and the benefits of physical activity.

Implications and Impact

Oregon's campaign reached its targeted audience—people aged 45–64 years with low-socioeconomic status, both white and African American. After the campaign, a survey of 300 adults with arthritis revealed that 56% reported hearing a message about the health benefits of physical activity for arthritis. Of those who heard the message, 24% recalled the campaign theme, *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever*, and 71% recalled the message that “physical activity is good for arthritis.” About 14% of people in the campaign target group reported increasing their physical activity in response to something they read or heard. Oregon's experiences are a model for other states wanting to conduct the *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever* campaign.