Wii Sports Games Inspire Seniors to Get Moving

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FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS MEDICINE

BALTIMORE — The Wii video game system helped seniors burn calories and become more active in a pilot study of 24 adults aged 66-78 years.

Group members burned 17-176 kcal during 30-minute games of Wii baseball, tennis, or team or individual bowling, Elizabeth Orsega-Smith, Ph.D., reported. The participants were enrolled at senior centers in Delaware. They were mostly women (87%) with an average age of 72 years. Participants were independent, community dwelling, and healthy but overweight—their mean body mass index was 32.67 kg/m².

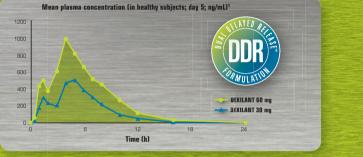
The participants wore accelerometers on their wrists during the games, and the researchers calculated caloric expenditure from the readings. Caloric expenditure ranged from 22 kcal to 114 kcal for baseball, and from 17 kcal to 72 kcal for tennis. Caloric expenditure for team bowling ranged from 18 kcal to 89 kcal but was 20 kcal to 176 kcal for individual bowling.

Wii games may be an easy option for senior centers and care facilities trying to get older adults to become more active. "For the most part, the seniors were able to pick up the game pretty rapidly. They didn't really have much difficulty in grasping the concept of using the controller and the motions that it takes to bowl, play tennis, or play baseball," she said. One senior center already had one of the game consoles but did not have a staff member available to help seniors use it; the other center did not have one.

Dr. Orsega-Smith reported that she had no relevant financial conflict of interest.



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Conclusions of comparative efficacy cannot be drawn from this information.

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