

Extension Project – Physical Exercise for Older Adults: The Experience of the University of Brasília, Brazil

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Resumo/Abstract:

Background: The Extension Project Physical Exercises for Older Adults, from the University of Brasília, has, since 1997, developed a program of physical exercises complemented by cultural activities aimed at promoting the health of the elderly population. The project is coordinated by the Study and Research Group on Physical Activities for Older Adults (GEPAFI), whose work has contributed to the development and dissemination of innovative practices focused on active and healthy aging. **Objective:** To describe the training methodology of GEPAFI and present its effects on the health of older adults. **Methods:** This is a descriptive study in which data from 78 GEPAFI participants, each with at least one year of practice and who completed an anamnesis form, were analyzed. GEPAFI adopts a standardized system aimed at resistance training for older adults, prioritizing efficiency, safety, and organization. Training sheets are structured according to complexity level and muscle groups, following scientific parameters. Exercises are performed in a circuit format, with an average duration of 60 minutes, and are individualized and adapted to the needs of each participant. **Results:** The sample consisted predominantly of women (76.9%), individuals with higher education (47.4%), and married (41.0%). The most prevalent conditions were arterial hypertension (46.2%), arthritis/arthrosis (39.7%), and osteoporosis (38.5%), all of which were mainly controlled through physical exercise. Despite reports of pain in the lumbar spine (42.9%), shoulders (36.4%), and knees (35.1%), 67.9% reported a reduction in pain after joining the program. Moreover, most participants had not experienced falls in the past 12 months and did not express concern about falling (91.0%). **Conclusions:** This study reinforces the relevance of the project as an effective strategy for promoting active aging. Initiatives of this nature can contribute to improving participants' health and quality-of-life indicators, while also strengthening university–community integration and consolidating the social role of institutions.

Palavras-chave/Key Words: Healthy Aging; Health Promotion; Health Policy