More Exercise for Seniors: Opportunities and Challenges

Since the 1960s, More Exercise for Seniors (MBvO in Dutch) has offered a number of physical activities designed specifically for elderly people. The aim of MBvO is to promote optimal functioning, not only physically but also mentally and socially. Although MBvO has been available for more than 40 years and 300,000 people participate weekly in its exercise classes, to date there has been no research into MBvO. This thesis reports the results of several studies of MBvO.

The results of our studies indicate that MBvO has considerable potential for increasing the physical activity of elderly people. The enormous network of MBvO instructors and groups means that nearly every municipality in the Netherlands offers MBvO. The dropout incidence of MBvO is low, and frequent participation has benefits, especially in certain subgroups of the population, such as older women, individuals with chronic diseases, and physically inactive individuals. Results showed that it is important to encourage participants to increase or maintain their level of exercise. The Health Enhancing Physical Activity guidelines (30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity daily for at least 5 – but preferably all – days of the week).