





Promoting sport participation: Exploring physical activity patterns and role models of aging amongst older persons


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Sport involvement **drops** as we age




- By age 55, only 17% of Canadians engage in sport (Stats Can 2013)
- Negative Stereotypes








Role Models

- Important for youth
- Utility for older adults?
- Designing effective interventions (Lockwood et al 2005)



Methodology

- 112 participants
- Elite athletes – completely sedentary
- Age range (60-94)
- Qualitative Interviews








Successful Aging

- Seniors have role models of what it means to 'age successfully'
- Biomedical vs Psychosocial approaches to aging
- Reactions to images of athletes
 - Similarities with literature on role models for young people

• Horton, S., Dionigi, R. A., & Bellamy, J. (2013). Canadian women aged 75 and over: Attitudes towards health related role models and female masters athletes. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies*, 7(3), 33-47.

• Dionigi, R. A., Horton, S., & Bellamy, J. (2011). Meanings of aging among older Canadian women of varying activity levels. *Leisure Sciences*, 33, 402-419.



Masters Athletes

- Empowerment
- Sport, above and beyond exercise
- Saw themselves as role models/advocates for healthy living






Masters Athletes

- Resist and reinforce aging stereotypes simultaneously
- Moralizing component to exercise
 - Old as 'other'
- Socioeconomic status



Policy Implications

- "Seniors" not a monolithic group
 - Value placed on sport
- Sport as fun, social, accessible, challenging

