INTRODUCTION

- The goal of the Walking for Our Health intervention was to obtain preliminary data on the effectiveness of two couple-focused goal setting interventions to increase physical activity (PA) among older, married adults
- Regular PA reduces the risk of all cause mortality and risks and symptoms of many chronic conditions\(^1\)
- Less than 5% of adults meet PA guidelines and PA declines with age\(^1\)
- PA interventions involving partners could harness social support which enhances self-efficacy, an essential component for increasing and maintaining PA\(^2,3\)

STUDY METHODS

- Our conceptual framework is informed by social cognitive theory and interdependence theory.\(^4,5\) (see Figure 1)

Table 1. Participant Demographics at Baseline (N=31 couples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Intervention design:
- Baseline assessments included: PA (using an accelerometer) and BMI from height and weight using the standard formula\(^6\)
- Partners were randomized (together) into one of two goal-setting conditions:
  - Concurrent individual: Each partner set and evaluated her/his own weekly step goals
  - Combined couple: Both partners evaluated their goal in terms of cumulative number of weekly steps
- Partners attended a group session specific for their intervention condition and received information about healthy PA targets and rates of progression for realistic, safe increases in PA.
- Participants also received 8 weekly phone calls to assist in setting and revising goals
- Participants met once more for follow-up assessments

RESULTS

- On average, weekly minutes of PA increased by 58 (p < 0.001) between pre-intervention and post-intervention eight weeks later (see figure 2). Weekly minutes of PA increased by 66 (p < 0.01), on average, for those in the concurrent individual goal setting group by and 49 minutes (p < 0.05), on average, for those in the combined couple goal setting group. There was no difference in these changes across the intervention groups (p = 0.62).

![Figure 2. Change in MVPA Pre-Post Intervention](image)

- Average BMI decreased by 0.50 kg/m\(^2\) (p < 0.01) and weight decreased by 1.42 kg (p < 0.01) between pre- and post-intervention (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Change in BMI Pre-Post Intervention](image)

CONCLUSIONS

- Results suggest that spouse-involved PA interventions could be effective in eliciting increases in PA among older married partners
- Partners may provide assistance, social support, and feedback to one other to maximize PA promotion
- Additional research is needed to understand effective strategies for maximizing PA promotion and maintenance drawing on available social support

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REFERENCES