

The Effects of 'Walk with a Doc' on a Population Who Live in an Underserved Community: A Pilot Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

- Why focus on an underserved community?
- Lack of opportunity for Physical Activity (PA)
 - Poorer health
 - Limited healthcare services access
 - Health disparities at the population level

Can people who live in an underserved community benefit from a Walk with a Doc (WWAD) program where they live?

2. METHODS

A Physical Therapy education program, health department, and housing authority partnered to offer weekly (8 weeks) WWAD event in a low-income housing unit in a severely disadvantaged area. WWAD is an international organization with over 540 chapters offering a framework for healthcare providers and students to lead health education and walking programs.



Pre-test post-test mixed methods design

Program: 5-7 Minute health education discussion & warm-up, 35 minutes walking laps at their own pace in the community room alongside Physical Therapists and Physical Therapy Students followed by a cool down time when participants were welcome to stay for unsupervised social time.

Outcome Measures

- Physical Therapy Lifestyle Appraisal (PTHLA)- 18 question tool to assess readiness and confidence to change health habits.
- EQ-5D-5L Health Status Questionnaire- 5 question tool measures quality of life over 5 domains.
- EQ-5D-5L Visual Analog Scale (VAS)- Asks how do you view your own health currently?
- Open feedback form
- Walking distance recorded

Descriptive statistics computed on Excel

3. RESULTS

9 participants mean age 54 years (31 to 76) walked 46.7km (0.1 km to 2.2 km) over 50 attendances. Pareto Classification of Health Change (PCHC) analysis of EQ-5D showed 2 participants' health state was better, 1 the same, 2 mixed, and 3 worse.

I learned something every week

I loved walking with you guys



Chart 1: Response to EQ VAS 'On a scale of 0-100 how good or bad is your health today?' (0=worse)

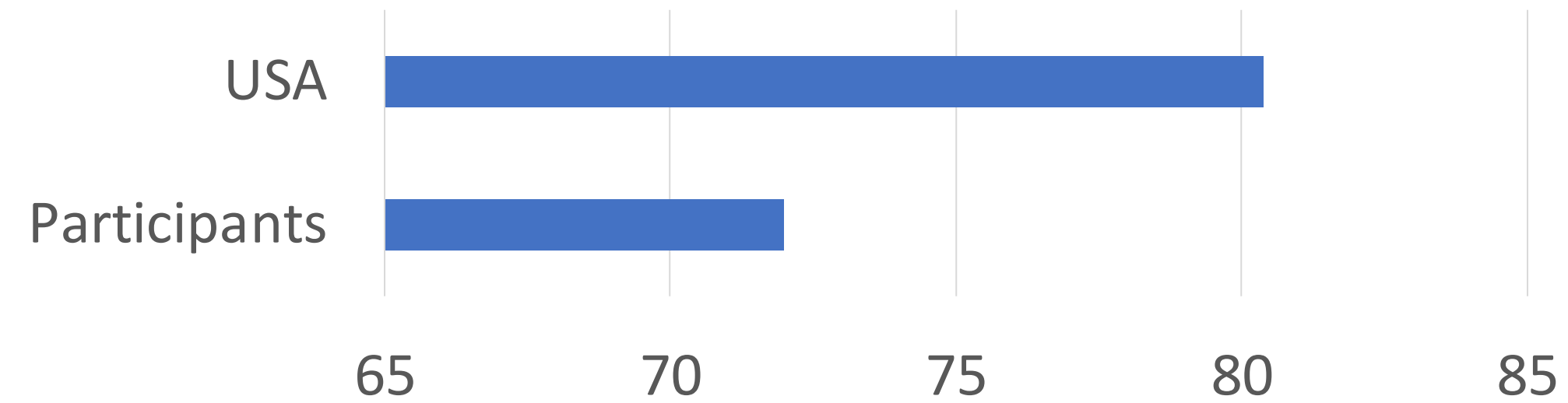
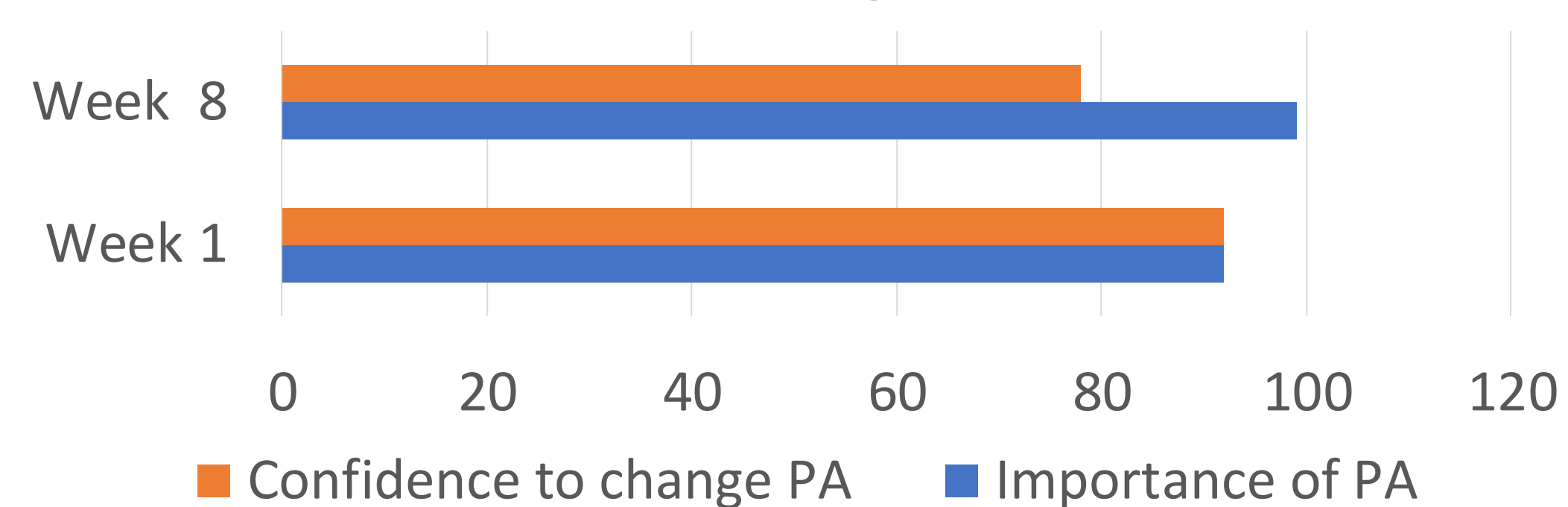


Chart 2: Change in Importance of PA & Confidence to change PA at baseline and Week 8 using PTHLA



4. DISCUSSION

- An underserved community with poorer overall health than the United States average participated in a WWAD program. See chart 1.
- The reported importance of PA increased. This could be related to health education provided. See chart 2.
- The confidence to be PA decreased, this could be due to recognizing the challenge of behavior change. See chart 2.
- Most participants reported improved, same, or mixed health status (PCHC).
- Participants reported positive emotions and enthusiasm.

Plans include adding a participant voice (especially Spanish-speaking) to continue weekly WWAD events. A second location, outdoor walks, and formal feedback from DPT students are also possibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

Can people who live in an underserved community benefit from a WWAD program where they live? YES!

Most participants reported improved, same or mixed health status (PCHC). The reported importance of physical activity increased. Participants reported positive emotions and enthusiasm for the group.

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References



Population Health Physiotherapy, Walk with a Doc in an Underserved Community in the USA: An Intersectoral Partnership Case Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

- Residents in underserved communities often have difficulty being active.
- There is limited research on how physiotherapists can change this!
- This study aimed to determine if an intersectoral academic-community partnership could implement a Walk with a Doc (WWAD) program in an underserved community.

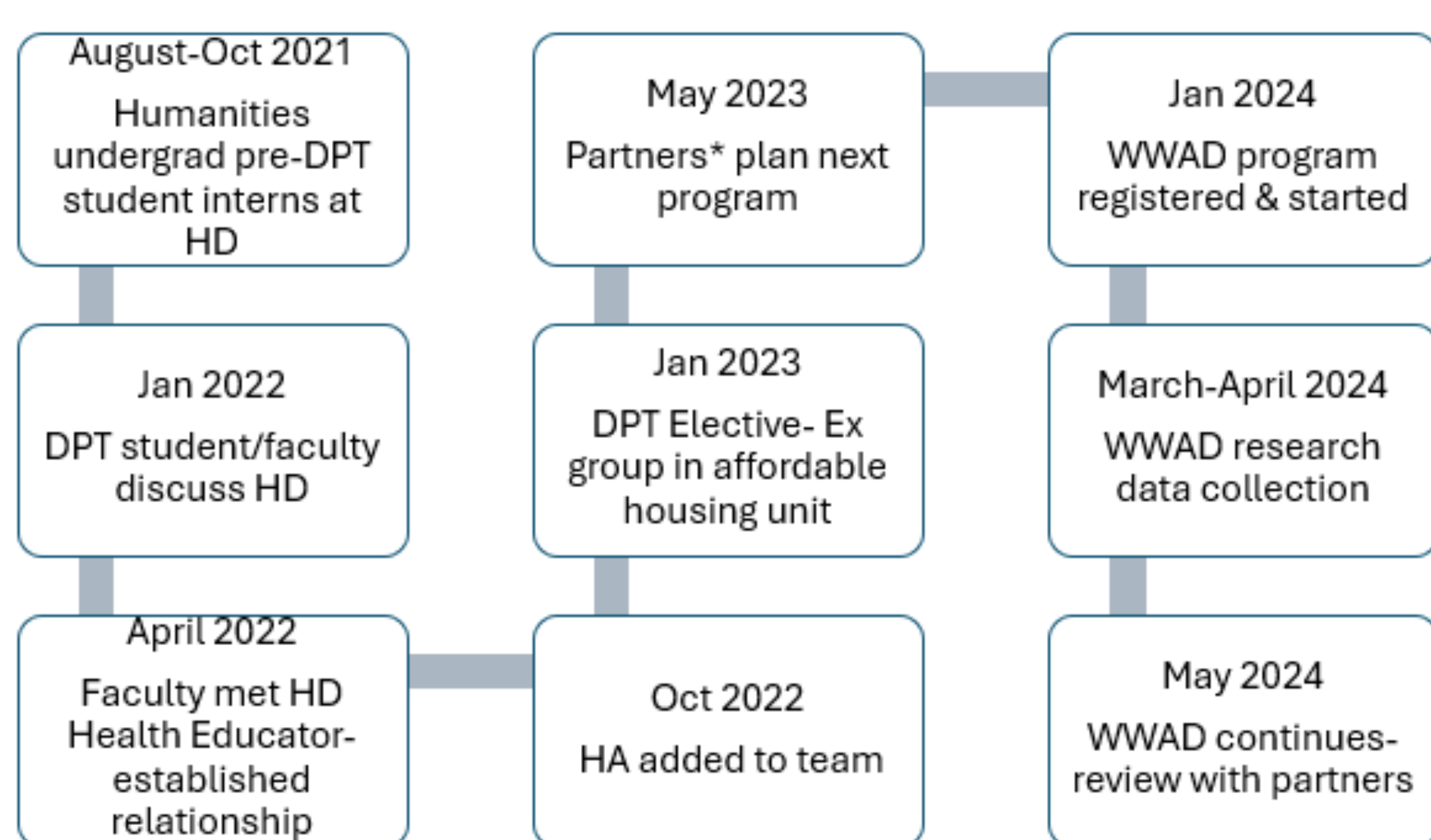
WWAD:

- International non-profit organization
- Over 540 chapters
- Offers a framework for healthcare providers and doctoral students to lead group walks and encourage healthy lifestyles



2. METHODS

- Over two years, faculty and students from a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program developed a relationship with a local Housing Authority (HA) and Health Department (HD).
- Contact was made with the HD during a student internship, which led to faculty collaboration.
- An initial 8-week exercise and health education program was developed within a 100-unit affordable housing complex in a severely disadvantaged neighbourhood selected by the HA.
- Progression led to creation of a registered WWAD chapter and a weekly walking and education program led by faculty and students.



*Partners refers to Faculty, Student DPT, HA & HD.

HA Housing Authority
 HD Health Department

3. RESULTS

- A WWAD program was successfully implemented, and a strong working relationship focused on the health and wellness of an underserved population was created through this academic-community partnership.
- Over 8 weeks nine people (mean age 54 years old) walked an aggregate of 46.7 km in their community room.
- Positive feedback from participants.

4. CONCLUSION

- This is the first study to report an academic-community partnership's implementation of a WWAD program for people in an underserved community.
- The common mission of all partners underpinned this success.
- HA and HD partners attended most WWAD sessions, which was an important touch point for productive conversations between all partners and participants.
- Effective and ongoing communication is key to relationship building and trust.
- The HD presented the experience at the State Level as an example of multisectoral advocacy.



5. IMPACT

- Physical Therapy (PT) literature highlights the role of PT education in moving PT toward providing equitable and preventative care at the community level.
- This work offers a feasible framework for implementation.
- The potential exists for PT programs globally to establish intersectoral partnerships and implement WWAD chapters to benefit people of underserved communities.



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