



WALK WITH A DOC



2017 EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

Limetree Research
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OBSERVED BENEFITS AND WALKING BEHAVIORS OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE WALK WITH A DOC PROGRAM



BACKGROUND

The WWAD program is a physician-led walking program. The walk starts with a 5-10 min physician-led health education talk, followed by a self-paced, group walk in a local park. The walk provides a physical activity outlet, health and social benefits, time to connect with a physician and an opportunity to learn and ask questions about health-related topics.



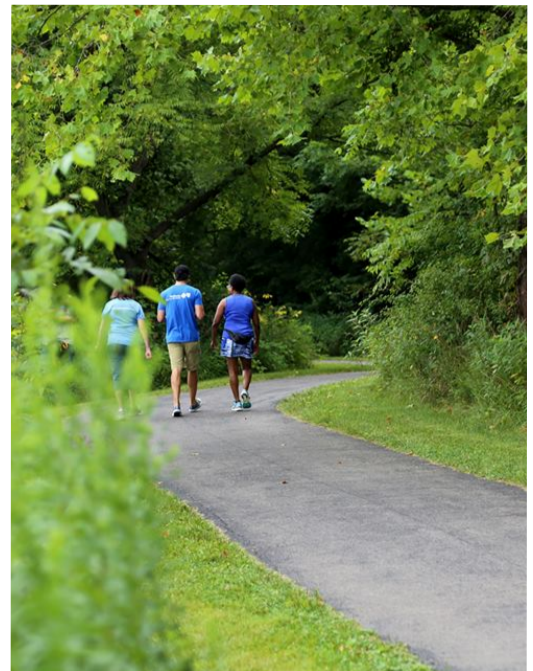
OBJECTIVE

To determine the benefits of the WWAD program for both physicians and walkers and to describe participants' walking behavior.

This descriptive/analytical cross-sectional study was part of an evaluability assessment of the WWAD program. Limetree Research conducted the study in Texas and Ohio between April and August of 2017. Funding for this study was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The study included:

- 244** WALKER SURVEYS
- 48** ONLINE PHYSICIAN SURVEYS
- 32** PARTICIPANTS WHO WORE A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TRACKER
- 7** WEB-BASED PHYSICIAN INTERVIEWS
- 3** WALKER FOCUS GROUPS
- 3** WALK CHAPTERS OBSERVED

METHODOLOGY



PARTICIPANTS



The two main program participant groups were walkers and physicians. The walker survey population was 76% female and over half of the walkers (60.4%) were 60 years or older. Six of the seven (86%) of the physicians interviewed were male.

FINDINGS



Walkers: The Survey

- Survey responses indicated that the top reasons walkers join the WWAD program were to complete their physical activity for the day, because they enjoy the company of others, to get health information, and meeting new people.
- Among the benefits of the walk, 96% of survey respondents strongly agree/agree that WWAD helps them lead a healthier lifestyle.
- Walkers indicated that participating in WWAD does something good for their health, helps them learn something new, improves their mood, increases their energy level, increases their confidence to continue being active, keeps their mind active, improves their confidence to ask their health care providers questions, and gives them a chance to socialize.
- 41.5% indicated they have met with other walkers to walk outside of the WWAD program.
- 62.3% reported that since joining WWAD their physical activity level has increased.

The Dose Effect of WWAD:



The longer that a respondent participated in WWAD program, the more likely they were to report that their physical activity had increased, $X_2(1, n=202) = 3.78, p < 0.05$ and they were more likely to meet with other walkers outside of the WWAD group to walk, $X_2(1, n=202) = 12.95, p < 0.05$. Additionally, there was a statistical linear trend between time on the WWAD program (dose effect) and the amount of time purposely walking in the past 7 days, $X_2(1, n=203) = 5.80, p < 0.05$.

Walkers: The Focus Groups

- Focus group activities and discussions revealed that the walkers feel that the walks are calm and relaxing, they feel accepted and that there is no pressure. A few reported that the walk provides a connection to nature and life. They are aware of the social and mental benefits the walk provides.
- Focus group participants reported that after a walk they feel energized, happy, joyful, satisfied, stimulated, welcome, confident, accomplished, and proud.
- When asked what it means to be a part of the WWAD community, focus group participants reported friendship, fun, motivation to exercise, better relationship with physicians, social support, and improved health.
- Walkers share the information they learned at WWAD with friends and family.
- As for the impact of the program on the relationship with their physician, walkers report knowing the types of questions to ask their physicians, having increased expectations of their physicians, feeling more support from their physicians, feeling doctors are more approachable and less intimidating, and believing that seeing a doctor in casual clothing breaks down barriers in the -patient-physician relationship.
- Participants love the walk so much they show up even when a walk is cancelled.
- Walkers are very committed to the program. When asked what would prevent them from coming to the program they reported *"Amputation of both legs"* or *"If I croak"*.



Walkers: The Wearables Study

- Fitbits were distributed at two walking locations: Georgetown, TX and the original walk (Highbanks/Polaris) in Columbus, OH. Of the 48 participants, 32 had valid data. Of the 32 walkers with valid data, most (62.5%) were 50-69 years; 25% were 70+ years; and 12.5% were 20-49 years of age.
- The 7 TX participants walked a total of 5,849,352 steps with an average of 9,557 steps/day. Participants accumulated 4,189 miles and 118,593 active minutes over the 612 days of Fitbit use and averaged 6.84 miles/day. The individual participant averages for the TX group were 835,621 steps, 598 miles and accumulated 16,941 active minutes over the 87 days of Fitbit data recorded.
- The 25 Ohio participants walked a total of 11,036,695 steps with an average of 7,043 steps/day. Participants accumulated 7,923 miles and 255,748 active minutes over the 1,567 days of Fitbit use and averaged 5.06 miles/day. The individual participant averages for the OH group were 441,467 steps, 317 miles and an accumulated 10,229 active minutes over the 63 days of Fitbit data recorded.
- The wearables study found that older participants, 50 years and older, accumulated more steps than younger participants (581,155 vs. 219,278 steps).

The Physician Interviews and Survey



- Physicians like the simplicity of the program and the informal and relaxing environment of the walk.
- WWAD makes physicians feel great. The program gives them the opportunity to lead by example, interact with other people in a relaxed and health promoting setting and helps physicians educate walkers about their health.
- The walk allows physicians to get some physical activity as well and serves as a reminder to stay active and remain healthy.
- Physicians like meeting and talking to the walkers. Most (86%) of the survey respondents reported feeling like they personally connect with the walkers at the walk.
- The walk keeps physicians connected to other colleagues because they invite physicians from other specialties to lead the walk with them and cover the health education talk.
- Physicians also believe that the program improves patient-physician relationships.
- WWAD is meaningful to physicians, it represents peace, hope and a promise for change.

As for the perceived benefits for their participants, physicians believe that WWAD:

- ⊕ Empowers walkers to have healthier lifestyles
- ⊕ Makes walkers more aware about their health
- ⊕ Improves walkers' health measures and quality of life
- ⊕ Increases physical activity in the community and improves community wellness
- ⊕ Provides opportunity for social interactions and social support that helps people cope
- ⊕ Makes physicians more approachable
- ⊕ Has a positive impact on walkers' lives

CONCLUSION

WWAD is an effective health promotion program that is moving participants along the physical activity spectrum. The impact of WWAD spans mental and physical health outcomes, social interactions and support, patient-physician relations and more. Globally, more walks and walk chapters are needed and will effectively break down many of today's health care barriers.



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