

Changing Approaches to Health and Exercise for Older Women

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MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED/DISCUSSED

1. In Germany, many studies showed that participation rates in sports/exercises in older women are higher than in older men. However, the mainstream sport culture (environment) and health system do not meet the needs of the older population, particularly old women. Development of the social health care system, as well as a reliable health infrastructure supporting old women's participation in sports/exercises should be considered for the purpose of active ageing.

2. In Singapore, a recent National Survey revealed that only 25% of women aged 40 years and above participate in sports. The overwhelming majority is sedentary and the health risks for this group are increasing. There is a misconception amongst women of this age group that sport is for the young and active. The key challenge is to change women's mindset and attitude towards physical activity and to encourage them to be physically active and to take responsibility for their own health.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION (WHO? WHAT? WHEN ? HOW ?)

1

WHAT: Encourage older women to participate in sports/physical activity/exercises in various forms (formal and informal activities).

WHO: A group of professionals enrolled in university settings.

WHEN: From the completion of the World Conference on Women and Sport in Kumamoto, 2006 onwards.

HOW: Through educational curriculum for medical students at each university.

2

WHAT: a) Encourage women of all ages to be aware of and be responsible for their own health through the "Be an Active Women" message and its related campaigns.

b) Secure sustainable funding for the above-mentioned activities through various resources.

WHO: Singapore Women and Sports Group (WSG) will be a lead agency in collaboration with various stakeholders such as Singapore Sports Council (SSC), the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, People's Association Women integration Network Council, Osteoporosis Society of Singapore, Health Promotion Board.

WHEN: From completion of the World Conference on Women and Sport in Kumamoto, 2006 onwards.

HOW: Through a nation-wide media campaign, internet, newspaper, publications, radio, TV etc.